



SERMONS.

BY
THE REV. PHIL. P. NEELY,
Late of the Alabama Conference.

With an Introduction by Bishop H. N. McTyeire, and a Biographical
Note by Rev. Dr. J. B. McFerrin.

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
SOUTHERN METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.
1884.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1884, by
J. ALICE NEELY,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

PREFACE.

THE sermons this volume contains were not written with a view to publication; on the contrary, it was an expressed desire of my husband that they should not be published unless it became a dire necessity; and such it now is. I give them to the public just as they were left in manuscript form, without any changes such as he might and doubtless would have made had they been prepared by his own hands for the press. The sermons have been carefully and kindly selected by wise heads and loving hearts. I would say just here that it was impossible to publish several sermons called for, inasmuch as they were simply made out in skeleton form and filled up extemporaneously.

I may be pardoned if, through this public medium, I thank our beloved Bishops and ministers of various Conferences for the many kind and encouraging words spoken in behalf of my book, during the months of unremitting toil I gave to the work preparatory to its completion. What an impetus words of cheer and kindness give us as we journey through life!

Those who have listened to the writer of these sermons will, in reading, miss the tender, gentle voice, the magnetic eye, the graceful gestures, and the wonderful spell of intense admiration and sympathy felt by all who heard him; but I feel that although the brain that conceived them and the hands that penned them have been stilled in death for long years, they will meet with a warm welcome and a tender greeting from many who loved him.

J. ALICE NEELY.

Dedication.

TO THE

BISHOPS, MINISTERS, AND FRIENDS

WHO SO GENEROUSLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE
PUBLICATION OF THIS VOLUME,

I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE ITS PAGES.

J. ALICE NEELY.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a good sign of the times when books of sermons are sought after and read. Such appreciation does not diminish the hearing of sermons, nor their careful preparation ; but rather it increases both.

Many souls have been awakened, and more have been edified, by printed discourses setting forth divine truth in a hortatory or expository manner. If we pray for the preacher going into the pulpit with the living word upon his lips, we may also pray for him as he goes forth, in the form of book or pamphlet, into the world that needs every ray of light and every influence for good that can be thrown upon it.

The reader's expectation of receiving benefit from the following sermons might reasonably be strengthened by the reflection that God had honored the author of them, oftentimes and in many places, by making him the messenger of comfort and of salvation to others ; and though the eloquent tongue be still and the graceful personage be absent, the substance of truth remains. Those who had heard Whitefield could never read the skeletons and reports of his sermons with any pleasure—they fell so far below the original delivery. Yet, even in that form, they did effective service—service that well repaid their publication. These sermons of the

Rev. Dr. Neely, however, have the advantage of having been written out by his own hand; and there are many passages which those who enjoyed the happiness of knowing and hearing him can make very vivid by calling up the look, the manner, and the tone of voice in which they were spoken.

May the godly sorrow and the gracious purpose of leading a new life, the increase of faith and hope, the consecration and the comfort which so often blessed his hearers, be the portion of his readers also!

H. N. McTYEIRE.

V. U., June 30, 1884.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

THE author of the following sermons was respectably connected. His father, Maj. Neely, was a gentleman of excellent standing, and his mother belonged to one of the best families in the West. He bore the name of both branches of the house—Philip Phillips Neely. He was born in Rutherford county, Tennessee, Sept. 9, 1819; converted Sept. 9, 1839; admitted on trial in the Tennessee Conference Sept. 9, 1840; and died in the city of Mobile, Alabama, Nov. 9, 1868. The ninth day of the month and the ninth month in the year seemed to be eventful periods in his history. His first appointment was Jackson Circuit, in West Tennessee. In the organization of the Memphis Conference he fell into that division, and was stationed at Holly Springs, Mississippi. In 1841 he was transferred to the Tennessee Conference, and for two years filled the Huntsville Station. For awhile he was President of the Columbia (Tennessee) Female College, and for two years traveled as agent for Transylvania University, of Kentucky. Afterward he was stationed at the McKendree Church, Nashville, and in 1848 was transferred to the Alabama Conference. Here for twenty years he filled most of the important stations in the Conference, and traveled some of its large districts as presiding elder.

He was always popular, and very successful as preacher and pastor. He possessed extraordinary gifts as a pulpit orator, and attracted crowds to hear him dispense the word of life. He represented his Annual Conference in the General Conference of 1866, the last he ever attended.

In person Dr. Neely was above medium size, very erect, and well formed. His complexion was fair, his eyes blue, and his face indicated intelligence and great kindness. His manner was attractive, and his voice had peculiar sweetness and wonderful compass. Altogether he had but few equals as a preacher. He was sound in his doctrinal views, and was a thorough Methodist. This second volume of his sermons will be read with pleasure and profit. His last illness was brief, continuing about one week. His sufferings were severe, but his victory complete. With these words quivering on his lips, "*Tell my brethren I die in the faith and in the love of my Church,*" he fell asleep in Jesus. Though dead he yet speaketh.

J. B. McFERRIN.

Nashville, June 30, 1884.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
What is the Almighty?.....	11
Holiness and Usefulness.....	28
Making Void the Law of God.....	44
Jesus and the Sisters at Bethany.....	60
The Need of Religion.....	78
The Bible as a Book of History.....	95
The Bible as a Book of Philosophy.....	111
The Bible as a Book of Poetry.....	127
Providence.....	142
Forbidding Children to Come to Christ.....	159
Diversity and Contentment in Labor.....	178
The Greatness and Value of Man.....	195
The Philosophy of Life.....	211
David's Despondency and Comfort.....	235
A Happy Old Age.....	247
The Final Deliverance.....	262
Life Spent as a Tale that is Told.....	290
Masonic Address.....	301



PHIL. P. NEELY'S SERMONS.

What is the Almighty?

“What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?”
Job xxi. 15.

THIS is a question which an infidel is supposed to ask of a man who believes in God's existence but not in his providence. There are many who believe in God, but they deny both his general and particular providence. They believe in his greatness, his majesty—in all that constitutes his sovereignty; but they contend that his very greatness proves that he does not concern himself with so insignificant an appendage of his empire as this planet, much less busy himself with the interests of its short-lived dwellers. There are multitudes of Christian men who believe this. They reduce the universe to essential orphanage by depriving it of all the practical benefits which the opposite belief secures to it by virtue of the greatness of its Author.

I will not say that the absorption of the modern mind in scientific studies with a view to the production of great material results is entirely responsible for this falling off from the faith as it is in Jesus, but I will say that its tendency, joined to the

natural gravitation of our appetites and passions, has had the decisive power to sink us all more or less in the darkness of this unbelief. It is not only a species of infidelity itself, but it furnishes food for the worst possible forms of infidelity, and even of atheism. To say, for instance, that there is a sovereign God who created all things, and yet to deny that he cares for and watches over what he has made, may well justify atheism to taunt us with the question, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?" This taunt was the result of the sad misinterpretation and the sadder misapplication of the doctrine of God's providence which the miserable comforters of Job made when they came to console him in his troubles. They contended that the great God had placed all things under the control of laws which would by necessity work out certain legitimate results; that by virtue of these ordinations, wickedness would be followed by sorrow and trouble, while righteousness would bring exemption; and that therefore the sufferings of Job furnished unmistakable proof that he was a hypocrite. In reply to their infidel reasonings, Job asks, "Wherefore do the wicked live—become old—yea, are mighty in power?" As if he had said: "While it is true that great wickedness is sometimes followed by remarkable punishments, it is also true that, in the providence of God, the notoriously wicked are often permitted to live and prosper, to grow old and become mighty; so that if your doctrine of fixed laws and penalties beyond even the control of God, the Maker and Legislator, be true, the hardened atheist

who ignores his existence altogether may well ask you, ‘What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?’ They may well mock you by asking: ‘What is he but an abstraction, without either the disposition or the power to help us? What, therefore, is such an Almighty, that we should either love or serve him?’”

Now, it is just in this way that the infidelity of the Church has always fed, and is still feeding, the infidelity of the world. We do not understand the relations of God to his creatures, because we will not take time to study them. This want of knowledge feeds the natural unbelief of our minds, so that we soon have scarcely any deep and well-grounded convictions at all; and this want of faith reflects back upon our children and upon our intimate friends, until they lose faith in God, in religion, in immortality, and in the eternal awards of the future.

There are thousands in the fold of Christ to-day who hold the same opinions of God and his providence that Job’s friends held. They acknowledge his greatness, and contend that because he is a great Sovereign, with a whole universe under the regulation of laws appointed by him for its government, he neither will nor can take a personal interest in any individual life. In this faith, or rather in this half faith, they talk to their children and friends, and beg them to enter upon the service of this God; but their children and friends think, if they do not ask “What is your great Sovereign, your God, who has forced us off from his care by laws which he can never pass to minister to our wants, no matter how troubled we are, nor how sobbingly we may beg

him to come and help us? What is such an Almighty, that we should give up the freedom of nature and enter upon his service?"

My purpose will be to try, by God's blessing, to show that the greatness of God, instead of furnishing an argument against his momentary watchfulness over each human life, is the very basis on which an enlightened faith expects and claims that watchfulness; and that therefore the commanding reason why you should serve him is found in the fact that this Almighty Sovereign does minister to your daily wants, and is momentarily engaged in seeking, in his own way and according to his own plans, your individual happiness. O if I can only make these things as plain to your minds as they are to mine, may I not hope that instead of asking, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?" you will voluntarily, and under the impulses of the purest and most grateful love, enter upon the service of one who, although an Almighty Being, is constantly laying that almightiness out for the good of his whole human family? In this hope I shall address you.

Let us see now if we can get at the foundation of these objections to the providence of God; for it is only by exposing the fallacy of this foundation that we can hope to refute the objections. The objections themselves are based on the assumption that it is incompatible with God's greatness for him to take any direct interest in what is going on in this contracted work of his universe, or for him to be occupied with the individual welfare of its population, and that as the Almighty Sovereign he

created all things and placed them under the government of fixed laws, and then retired, so to speak, in the depths of his own solitude, leaving the universe itself and all created intelligences to work out their destiny in obedience to these laws.

These objections are founded in ignorance. They are founded, first, in an ignorance of what divine greatness consists in. The true greatness of God consists in his almightiness—in the fact that his omnipotence is equal to any and every thing consistent with himself and in harmony with his own almighty purposes; and hence, to make their objections valid, the objectors must show wherein it would be inconsistent with himself, or with his purposes, for the Sovereign God to care for the meanest thing he has created. On the contrary, it were easy to show that for him to create a world and then abandon it to a system of laws which, notwithstanding he ordained them himself, he had voluntarily put beyond his control—or that for him to create an immortal soul, and then leave it to fight its way through sin and suffering without the care and watchfulness which his almightiness gives him the ability to bestow—would be unparalleled cruelty, and nothing else.

These objections are founded, in the second place, in an ignorance of the difference—the infinite difference—between human and divine greatness. Now, among finite beings, it is not easy, nor is it always possible, to combine attention to what is minute or comparatively unimportant with attention to what is of vast moment. The highest human greatness may not always be able to do this, and for

the reason that the greatness is finite, and therefore limited. But who would say that this defection was an excellence? Who would deny that to unite in one being the power to attend to things comparatively unimportant, as well as things of vast moment, would be an excellence? Who would deny that the man in whom they were combined, and who used his greatness and employed his power in looking after the unimportant as well as the momentous interests committed to him, would, in the degree he did this, be entitled to our admiration and respect? or that, having this power and refusing to use it, he would be entitled to our scorn and indignation?

Who among you can deny these things? Would there not be a feeling amounting to veneration toward that ruler who should prove himself equal to the superintending of every great concern of an empire, and who could yet give a personal attention to the wants of many of the poorest of its families; and who, while gathering within the compass of an ample intelligence every question of foreign and home policy—protecting the commerce, maintaining the honor, and fostering the institutions of the State—could minister tenderly at the bedside of sickness, and hearken patiently to the tale of calamity, and be as active for the widow and the orphan as though his one business were to lighten the pressure of domestic affliction among his subjects? Now, if this be true as to an earthly ruler, it must be equally true as to the Almighty Ruler. To us, whose minds are so easily distracted by a multiplicity of objects, it seems inconceivable that it should be

otherwise with God. And this is the secret of much of the infidelity I am trying to combat. We will not get away from the unreasonableness of judging of the Almighty by ourselves. To bring him down to the level of our comprehension, we clothe him with our own impotency. We transfer to his infinite mind all the imperfections of our own faculties. While we add to the glories of his character by conceding that he has millions of worlds to look after, we then detract from the glories of that character by saying that he looks after each of those worlds imperfectly. We believe in his creative greatness, yet we drag him down by our unbelief from the lofty summit of his sovereign power to the standard of our own paltry imagination. We admit that his very sovereignty and almightiness prove that he can diffuse the benefits of his power throughout all worlds; and in the same breath we say that he cannot and will not diffuse them among the individuals of even one of those worlds. In this way, while we enlarge the provinces of his empire, we tarnish all the glory of this enlargement by saying that he has so much to care for, on account of his creative greatness, that we cannot now expect him to care minutely for any one of his provinces. What is this but measuring the Almighty by our own little selves? To admit that he is the Almighty, and yet to deny that he is in every place and with every human being—what is this but to magnify one of his perfections at the expense of another? What is this but to sacrifice his greatness in order that we may the more easily comprehend him? and

what is this attempt to bring him within the grasp of our feeble capacity but the effacement of one of the glories of his character, which we ought to adore as higher than all thought and above all comprehension? These are some of the results of that ignorance which would measure Divine greatness by our limited notions of human greatness.

These objections to God's providence are founded, in the third place, in an ignorance—at least, in a denial—of the obligations implied in the simple fact of creation. If God created all things, he must, to be consistent with every acknowledged principle of justice and tenderness, have a fatherly concern for all things. Whatever be deemed worthy to make he must deem worthy of his preservation, otherwise he is chargeable with the folly of creating what was not worth caring for. Therefore, if any thing exists that could not have existed but by his power, it must, if he be a wise Creator, be worthy of his watchful regard. It follows, then, that his universal providence is an inference necessarily drawn from the truth of his being the universal Creator. You may ask how it is that the great God, who “sitteth upon the circle of the earth,” and to whom the “inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers,” can care for the animalcule as it floats upon the evening breeze; but I ask in reply, Was it this great God that gave substance and animation to that invisible atom? and until you can show me that it had some other Creator, I hold it to be every way worthy of God to be its guardian; for it cannot be more true that as universal Creator he had

the power to bring the tiny insect into being than that as universal sustainer he has both the power and the disposition to care for it as an offspring of his creative power. The greatness of God, then, as the Creator of innumerable worlds, becomes an argument in support of his care for the workmanship of his hands. The more we know of the extent of creation the loftier will be the conceptions of a devout science of Him who presides over so wide an empire. It adds to the bright catalogue of his other attributes to say that while magnitude does not overpower him minuteness cannot escape him, nor variety bewilder him; and that at the very time, and while his mind is abroad over the whole vastness of creation, there is not one particle of matter—not one individual principle of rational or of animal existence, not one single world in that expanse which teems with them—that his eye does not discern as constantly, and his hand guide as unerringly, and his spirit watch and care for as vigilantly, as if it formed the one and exclusive object of his attention.

The argument of infidelity, then, against the providence of God becomes, when examined, a mountain of proof in its favor. But this unbelief as to God's providence is founded mainly on an ignorance of the nature of God and of his relations to his creatures, as this nature and these relations are revealed to us in his Word. In that Word he is revealed as a God of majesty, of infinite power and wisdom and love; as the Father of all, and as momentarily engaged in promoting the happiness of

his children. I need not give you chapter and verse to prove this. It runs all through the writings of those holy men of old, who thought and spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And it is a remarkable fact, too, that in proportion to the view they had of the greatness and glory of God were their confidence and hope in him as their Father and Friend. Now, according to their representation of him as a being possessing omniscience, it is evident that nothing can happen in any part of the universe but by his appointment or permission. Remember now that it is either by his appointment or permission, for it is admitted that while he governs all things, both in heaven and earth, there is much which he allows to be done that cannot be referred directly to his authorship. And yet his Word tells us that his providence overrules even evil things so as to make them subservient to the march of his purposes.

When you ask, then, "What is the Almighty?" I answer that according to his Word he is the First Cause of things, and that upon him all secondary causes, whether of good or evil, depend. This I hold to be a self-evident principle, and yet men are prone to forget it. Whenever you get away from this self-evident principle, you will find yourselves lost in a wide labyrinth and perplexed by the multiplicity of agencies with which you will find yourselves surrounded; but if you hold yourselves to the divine record, which even your reason will indorse in this matter, you will find every thing unfolding in beautiful and simple order, and all tend-

ing to confirm you in the belief of God's universal providence. According to this self-evident principle, which I need not argue, it is the Almighty whose energies are extended through earth and sea and air, causing those unnumbered and beneficial results which we ascribe to nature. By him all those contingencies which seem to us fortuitous and casual are directed, so that events brought round by what men call accident are only so many parts of his providence. It is his almighty influence that softens the obdurate heart of the sinner and works upon the rebellious will, so that there is never a good thought conceived, nor a good purpose formed, nor a good action done in the world that may not be traced to his instigation. It is the Almighty from whom come those interpositions by which dangers are averted, fears dispersed, and sorrows removed. He, in a word, is the great First Cause, on which all secondary and subordinate causes are made to depend. The Scriptures so represent him, and yet you ask, "What is the Almighty, that I should serve him?" Where, I ask, is the solitude he does not fill? Where is the motion, from the revolving world to the floating atom he does not direct? Where is the creature he does not sustain? Where is the want he does not supply? If, with the psalmist, we could ascend up to heaven or make our bed in hell; if we could take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; if we could make this mighty exploration through the untracked deserts of space, and along the infinitudes of heaven and hell, we would never

find a world so lonely as to be without him—never find a habitation so humble as that he was not present as Protector and Defender, nor a human being so lowly as that he did not encamp around him as Guardian and Comforter. O it is the confessed nature of his Godhead that gives me assurance that in all the greatness of his almightiness he pervades every system and sun and star with his presence; always present everywhere—present as much at one moment as at another, present as much in one world as in another immeasurably distant, and covering with the wings of his providence all that he has formed and every thing he has animated. O it is impossible that he should ever lose sight, even for one moment, of any thing he has created. His Word is as clear on this point as it is of his existence. It is clear to reason too, when she looks at it with reverent and devout eye. And this shows how widely diversified and how multiplied into many thousand distinct exercises is the attention of God. Who can think of it without adoration? Who can compass this great thought and not be willing to serve him? To me it is the most precious of all thoughts that his eye is on me every moment of my existence—to know that his Spirit is present with every thought of my heart, that his inspiration gives birth to every good purpose within me; that his presiding influence keeps by me through the whole current of my restless and ever-changing history; that when I walk by the way-side, he is with me; that when I enter company, amid all my forgetfulness he never forgets me; that in the silent watches of the night, when

all unconscious, the Eye that never slumbers is upon me. O I cannot if I would, and I would not if I could—no, not for worlds—fly from his presence! Go where I will, he tends me and watches me and cares for me; and the same Being who is at work throughout unnumbered worlds is at work with me and for my present and eternal good. O I will not, I cannot let go my confidence in God! No matter what comes, I will hold on to this anchor. Fortune may go, friends may desert—foes may unite, devils may league, for my destruction—yet I will not be afraid; for he notices the falling sparrow, and I know that I am of more value than many sparrows. Trusting in him, I can dare to do right in the face of the world's loud laugh of scorn; and by his grace I will.

This is the Almighty Creator and Guardian of worlds who claims your service, and whose almightiness is pledged not only to direct and uphold the mighty globes with which immensity is peopled, but to care for each dweller on these globes as constantly and as watchingly as though he were the only being that lives.

I love to contemplate God as the Architect of creation, filling the vast void with magnificent structures. I love to think of the attributes that make up his Godhead, and which flame out around his august character with a glory divine and unapproachable—his omniscience, his omnipresence, his omnipotence, and his eternity. When I think of these—so high, so sublime, so God-like—I am awed into silent admiration; but when I think of his providence, which engages all these mighty at-

tributes for my care, it commends itself to my gratitude and love, and I feel that had I a thousand souls to give, this God should have them all. O I cannot see how any man can withhold his reverence, his confidence, his life-long service, when he thinks of this Almighty Being as superintending all that has form or life in his boundless dominions—guiding the roll of every planet, and the rush of every cataract, and the motion of every will; tending the couch of the sick man on his pallet of straw; guarding the lonely widow as she toils through the night, and until the day dawns, that her children may have bread; keeping watch with the soldier as he bivouacs under the light of stars, and with the sailor-boy as he swings in his hammock and dreams of home; and with the lonely orphan, who has no father but the Father in heaven. O it would take from this Almighty all that is encouraging in his attributes were you to throw doubt on this doctrine of universal providence. To say that because he is the Almighty he is therefore separated from me, and cannot or will not be my Guardian, would be to put hot curses on my lips, for having given me life amid such perils as surround me and then denied me the only help that can afford security. I marvel not that men who have planted themselves on this rock of unbelief should cry out in tones of defiant scorn, “What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?” and that they should gird themselves to meet his wrath as the martyr meets the devouring flames. But O I marvel more that men will not admit the light of this faith and the joy and

hope, the tranquillity and trust, it brings. And I marvel more than all that any of you who are persuaded that all the Divine greatness is under continual tribute for human happiness; who believe that the almightiness of God is pledged for the guardianship and protection of those who submit themselves to his will, and that his providence extends to every thing that has life—to the king in his purple, to the beggar in his rags—the greatest of all marvels to me is that you who believe his Word when it declares that not even “a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice,” and that even the “hairs of your head are numbered,” can withhold from him, even for one day or hour, the love and gratitude of your hearts, and the service of your lives.

O there is no contentment, no peace, no joy in this world that can equal that of serving God in the unwavering trust that our whole lives are directed by his ordering; that his providence is with us when we go forth to our daily tasks, as well as when closeted with him in prayer; that he bears us company in our toils, and sits down with us as we gather our little ones for the scanty meal; that we cannot weep a tear which he does not see, nor breathe a wish which he does not hear; that the very same providence which guides the marchings of planets and regulates the convulsions of empires is with us at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances. To have this trust is to have all undue anxieties dismissed, all our energies fully employed and rightfully directed, and to rest in undisturbed tran-

quillity and peace. To have this faith would be to leave every thing, great and small, in the hands of one who is almighty, and who cannot be perplexed by multiplicity nor overpowered by magnitude; and the result would be that neither those little cares that ruffle the surface of the sea of life nor those fiercer storms that breathe threatenings of shipwreck could mar the peace or disturb the serenity of our souls. O to have this trust is to have our hope planted in Christ; and if hope be fixed on that Rock of Ages, "which was rent on purpose, that there might be a holding place for the anchors of a perishing world," how else than calm can we be as our barks ride the turbulent sea of time? O doubting one, you may refuse this trust, you may intrench yourself in doubt, you may stand up in the citadel of your unbelief and proudly ask, "What is the Almighty, that I should serve him?"—you may despise the hope which this trust offers—but without this anchor of the soul you are doomed to final and irretrievable shipwreck. You may, by possibility, escape it in time, but I know of a coming tempest that will wreck your vessel and strand your hopes. It will be a tempest that will terribly shake the earth and scatter the stars from their places in the sky. It will be that hurricane which when it has passed will leave vessels now laden with reason, and high intelligence, and noble faculty drifting to and fro, shattered and dismantled, and to be cast at last as fuel in the flames unquenchable. But, O blessed be God, there are vessels though which, when that fearful tempest is over, and the light of the morning

which is to know no night breaks forth gloriously upon the horizon of eternity, will be found fast anchored by the throne of God and floating tranquilly in the sea of his love. These be they—and O that you may be of that number!—who have chosen the service of the Almighty, who were girded by him for the journey of life, who committed themselves to his care, who trusted themselves to his providence, whose hope was anchored on Christ, “within the veil;” and these, when the judgment storm will be convulsing earth and sea and sky, will be heard singing as they round the last point and enter the port:

Into the harbor of heaven we glide,
Softly we drift on its bright silver tide,
For we're home at last!

Holiness and Usefulness.

"And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation." Hebrews xiii. 22.

I PROPOSE, in this opening service of the new year, to offer you a word of exhortation on some matters which enter into our organization as a Church, and which I think are essential to our prosperity as a Christian people. And in order that I may have some general landmarks to guide me in this exhortation, I will read you first these words of the Apostle Paul, addressed to the Church at Rome: "I would have you wise unto that which is good and harmless concerning evil;" next, these words of the same apostle, written to the Philippian Church: "That ye may be harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" and also his advice to the Church at Galatia: "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men."

In connection with these scriptures, I shall refer also to-day to some directions for Christian conduct, to be found in the General Rules of our Church.

Mr. Wesley's object in the organization of his United Societies in England and America was per-

sonal holiness and usefulness—the first embracing the fundamental principle, and the second comprising the end of his organization; and if the history of that organization shows, as I think it most unquestionably does, that it has accomplished that object, it is a better vindication of the claims of Methodism upon the people of this country than can be presented by any Christian body that has not outstripped her in the great mission of making men holy and useful.

That form of Christianity which does most toward the moral rehabilitation of humanity has the highest claims upon a Christian nation for appreciation and respect.

I am honest in the belief that the form of Christianity known as Episcopal Methodism has made more ample provisions for reproducing the central idea of Christianity, which is holiness, than has been made since the days of the apostle.

This is not the language of bigotry, but of sober conviction; and it is because of this conviction that I am identified, and expect ever to be identified, with Episcopal Methodism in her grand purpose of saving souls.

To be convinced that this is true of this form of Christianity, you have only to look at the doctrines of Methodism—her rules for living and the aids to the culture of a holy life, interwoven with her polity—and which are laid down in what is known as the General Rules of our Church.

Her doctrines are authenticated by the Divine Word. They fit into the fallen condition of humanity,

and contemplate its redemption by means of a universal atonement, and upon the condition of spotless, self-denying, holy living.

However, it is to her General Rules as containing a complete direction for the attainment of holiness and usefulness that I shall refer in the course of this exhortation.

In those General Rules, the basis of Church-membership is reduced to one simple condition, and that is, "A desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from sin."

Methodism holds that where a sinner is truly awakened to a sense of his danger, and a desire for salvation, he should at once place himself in a situation where he can receive the greatest spiritual help, and that therefore his proper place is in the Church of Christ—not to sit down in self-satisfied security and ease, but to follow those godly directions which the Church offers as helps to him who is seeking salvation, and which, if faithfully followed, will infallibly lead to it.

The basis of membership being fixed in our General Rules, it is next asserted that when this "desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from sin," is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. A test, you see, is at once instituted; and that test is negative and positive—that is, the desire will prove itself genuine first by what the man avoids, and next by what he does. Hence, in our Book of Discipline we read: "It is expected of all who continue therein"—that is, in our Church—"that they should evidence their desire

of salvation first by doing no harm—by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced ;” and the General Rules go on then to specify the evils to be avoided.

The first provision now, which our Church sets forth for making her membership holy and useful, is harmlessness. They are to do no harm—to avoid evil of every kind, especially those common evils of society which, although allowable by our social canons, are not in harmony with the Christianity of the New Testament, and cannot be habitually indulged in without serious damage to personal piety.

Although Mr. Wesley never did sever his connection with the Church of England, he felt called upon, in the order of Providence, to give system to the religious movement of which he was the leading instrument; so that what was intended at first merely as a reformation in the Church became, in the providence of God, a distinct and regularly organized Church, which, while it retained the doctrines and many of the forms of the old Establishment, proclaimed a higher practical Christianity and adopted rules for its attainment.

It begins by insisting that its membership must be blameless in life—that they must avoid evil of every kind, especially those social evils the practice of which had obliterated all distinction between the Church and the world, and which had shorn the English Church of its saving power.

This harmlessness which is taught in our General Rules, while it is essentially negative, is nevertheless

the only foundation on which a man can build a holy, useful life. In fact, to be blameless in life is to be holy in life; and this very harmlessness, or innocence, will of itself become a force—silent and unobtrusive it may be, yet nevertheless positive and efficient. This is taught by the apostle, when he says: “Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” The very fact that they were blameless and harmless in life, and that they avoided evil of every kind, made them the light-givers of Christianity to that age. This of itself made them luminous with innocence—made them examples of holy, self-denying purity to that crooked and perverse nation, among whom they stood as givers out of Christian light.

No matter what may be a man's capabilities for being useful, they must be bottomed on harmlessness before they can avail much. There are many men in the Church who if they would lay this foundation would be eminently useful. They have talents, social gifts, general influence, every element of usefulness; yet their lives are not blameless. Their religion is latitudinarian, and their influence in the Church is destroyed. They seem intent on doing good, yet not being equally intent on doing no harm, their attempts to do good result in just nothing at all. The positive part of their religion is neutralized by their inattention to the negative. They are like sentinels who sleep at their posts and

endanger the whole army by a betrayal of their trust. They are stumbling-blocks in the way of the unconverted. They are the barriers that break and scatter the streams of revival that would otherwise gladden the City of God. They quench the good influence of the Divine Spirit, and even repel it from the congregation. They chill and dishearten the preacher. They neutralize the gospel; and better for him and that gospel that he stand alone, like Paul on Mars' Hill, than be surrounded by such latitudinarian professors of religion, as the lights by which the people are to be illuminated.

It only needs attention to this first direction in our General Rules for the Church here and everywhere else to exert a tremendous influence for good among the people. If Christians would determine to avoid evil of every kind, and to be examples of holy, self-denying, religious virtue, the very spotlessness of their lives would be a standing rebuke to the sin and wickedness and folly of the age, and would commend religion as the great conservator of society. In this respect the young people of the Church in this city have lodged in their hands a fearful responsibility. They have it in their power to control society. They have position and influence and numbers, and could, if they were so minded and would act in concert, frown down many of those amusements and follies which even the world pronounces incompatible with a high standard of Christian excellence, but which, alas! too many professing Christians relish and encourage.

Whatever course others may pursue, I implore

you who have been committed to my spiritual keeping and direction to set yourselves resolutely against all violation of those vows in which you pledged yourselves to renounce the devil and all his works, together with the pomps and vanities of the world, so that you would neither follow nor be led by them. I solemnly beseech you, my children in Christ, to resolve—on this first Sabbath of a new year—that while you will cultivate and exhibit the amenities and courtesies of social life, as far as Christian refinement will safely permit you, you will not, to secure the commendation of anybody, prove recreant to your solemn Church covenant, or take part in any of those social evils which both your Church and the Word of God declare to be inconsistent with Christian profession and character.

It will not do to lower our standard of piety down to the social level. No matter what other Churches may tolerate, there are certain social evils and practices which, from the beginning, Methodism has declared wrong; and in doing this she has only repeated what the Word of God has said. I dare to say, therefore, that if, as a member of that Church, you are not a good and holy man, it is not from any defect in her provisions for making you holy, but because you have failed to live up to her standard. It is the failure of her members to conform to her Rules, and especially in the matter of those social evils, that is hindering her progress more than the open opposition of a wicked world in the beginning of her history ever did. It is de-

fection here, my brethren, and a popularization of this defection in the Church, that is binding and retarding the operations of our admirable machinery. The great evil among us is a neglect of the Rules we have promised to live by, the following of evils which we have promised to renounce. Our offense is an aggregation of smaller offenses, which our General Rules tell us to avoid. It consists in an irreverent use of the sacred name of God, in a profanation of the holy Sabbath, in brother's going to law with brother, in uncharitable and unprofitable conversation, in speaking evil of magistrates and ministers, in doing to others as we would not have them do unto us, in doing what we know is not for the glory of God, in needless self-indulgence, in conforming to the spirit and practice of the world—in doing those things, in short, which are catalogued in our Rules as the evils we are to avoid.

There are hundreds in our Communion who have not so much as read these Rules, and hundreds more who have gradually ceased to respect and regard them, until all distinction between them and the avowed worldly religionist has perished.

Let me be personal here, and ask, How is it with you in the matter? When you entered into membership in the Methodist Church, you did it perhaps because of the ample provision she makes for Christian nurture. You wanted to get to heaven, and you entered her pale with a warm heart and an earnest zeal. In the outset you were faithful to all your duties, and you gave promise of great usefulness. You had the confidence of all

your brethren, and were at peace with God and the world. The love-feast, the class-room, the prayer-meeting, the Sabbath-school—these constituted your chief joy. You did no harm; you avoided evil of every kind, especially those named in our General Rules; you were a simple-hearted, useful, happy man, honoring God and loving your Church. How is it with you now? You are perhaps far away from your former loyalty—have lost your zeal, your love, and with them your happiness. Prosperity brought worldliness, and worldliness opened the way to folly, until now, although you have a name to live, you are spiritually dead. The evil began when you began to neglect this first rule for Methodist living, “Doing no harm, avoiding evil of every kind,” and it went on until the light in you became darkness.

The only way to a beautiful Christian life lies through harmlessness, or innocence. It is the first step, and it must be kept up all the way, or all efforts to be useful will fail. Not unfrequently when our young people seem to be doing well, and giving promise of eminent usefulness, they are seen making compromises with the world as to some of its evil practices and fashionable follies, and the hopeful harvest is blighted. In this way they afflict their pastor, they sadden their friends, they gratify the enemies of religion, they blast all the good they have done, and are in peril of bringing irretrievable ruin upon their souls. O if you have an earnest desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from your sins, and have sought membership

in the Church with a view of receiving help, do not forget that you are to evidence the sincerity of your desire first by doing no harm, and by avoiding evil of every kind. But this not all. So far, religion is only negative. Our General Rules make other provisions. We are not only to do no harm, but in the second place we are to do "good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men—to their bodies and to their souls;" and this is what may be called positive religion—a religion that is not only blameless but lays itself out in all good and righteous works.

It were no doubt a great improvement (as Dr. Olin has said) upon the actual condition of the Church if her members were harmless—were so consistent as to bring no reproach on the cause of Christ, and to present no obstacle in the way of the success of the gospel; yet it must be confessed that simple harmlessness would be a very poor and degraded type of piety. It is a good foundation, but it is not the completed building. To this negative Christianity must be added a vast outlay of positive power. This is true of personal religion, and it is eminently true of religion as an aggressive force. In fact, the availability of the death of Christ in the redemption of our race depends on it. I do not go beyond the truth when I say that the Church, as the representative of Christ, has only to withdraw its positive outlay in the world for the world to be hopelessly ruined. He has only to let sinners alone for them to be lost. It is true the interposition of grace and of providence would still

alarm them; they would still be awakened by the Spirit and summoned by nature from the deep foundations among the rocks to her residences among the clouds, to come back to their heritage; yet God has ordained that these agencies of salvation are to be made effective through the zeal and energy of his Church, and hence it only requires that his people content themselves with doing no harm for the world to be speedily ruined. How poor that ambition, then, that would be satisfied with a harmless piety, a religion whose only virtue is that it does no harm in the world; and I am afraid that with many this is their ideal of religion. They have no higher wish than to live so as to injure nobody. This is their highest contemplated attainment in religion. They are willing to receive quietly all they can get, yet never aspire to send back something in return.

In political economy men are taught not only to consume but to produce, and failure leads to pauperism. The rule will apply in religion. The man who simply does no harm—who reduces his religion to mere quietism, who is content to dream away his life in conventicle peace—consumes, without producing. Such men become dead weights in a Church. They are actually burdens, and, if they make any progress at all in religion, owe their advance to others who bear them on, just as the swelling tide bears light, unresisting substances to land. The point I make is that we must do the work of Christ, as well as feel his power, or our religion will be worth nothing. What made the

conduct of the man that buried his talent so reprehensible? It was his want of productiveness, his being satisfied simply with doing no harm. My brother, you must put away this low view of duty and obligation if you would have an evangelical piety. You dishonor religion, and as Methodists you dishonor your Church, if you dole out your obedience and your sacrifices as if afraid of going beyond the minimum of religion. The founder of your religion, and the founder of your Church, provided for you to proceed upon a scale of large and generous liberality, in obedience and sacrifice. Do not act toward Christ as if you believed that he is "an austere man, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he never scattered;" but let your obedience be prompt and cheerful, and in evidence of a great gratitude for his mercies. You should anxiously inquire, How much can I do for my Lord? rather than How little may I dare do and be safe?

There are hundreds who gauge their piety and reduce it down to the least standard compatible with the hope of salvation. Their whole study is to find out the least possible amount of religion that will keep them from being lost. They never aim at any thing higher, nor want any thing more. They drift into a style of religion that just keeps their hopes of heaven alive; and fortifying themselves there, they bid defiance to every attempt to urge them to better things. All the arguments of the pulpit, all its urgent calls to higher attainments and to greater sacrifices, they treat with cool indifference, or taunt as pulpit extravagance. The most

solemn appeals to their reason and conscience and interest fail to disenchant them or to rouse them from their carnal security. They seem to have made up their minds to expend just as little as possible in the way of self-denial and cross-bearing on the way to heaven, and to do nothing more than will barely keep them from being damned. All the use their servile souls have for religion is to keep them out of perdition. More than that they do not want, do not ask for, and would not have, even were it pressed upon them. More than that would crowd out those worldly follies and pleasures and amusements which in the face of a loudly protesting gospel they have determined to enjoy. The only obedience they will tolerate is that sentimental obedience which a fashionable, worldly piety condescends to popularize, and which manifests itself in a venerable creed and a pompous ritual. I ask now, in all honesty, What claims (historic or otherwise) has a worldly religion like this upon our appreciation or respect? I ask, in all sincerity, What can a religion like this do toward making the Church of Christ true to her appointed mission, which is the conversion of the world? And I ask further, If left to rely on such a religion, where would be the hope of the world? It was a defective religion like this that called for the Lutheran reformation in the sixteenth century. It gave birth to the Wesleyan reformation in England a hundred years ago; and as long as the form of Christianity to which that reformation gave order and permanence provides for making men holy and useful, so

long will it present evangelical claims upon this country which the living and sanctifying Spirit of God will approve and indorse.

I call upon you to-day to be true to those great principles of your Church which for a century have been silently working their way into the great heart of humanity, until, from a few praying students at Oxford, they have multiplied into two million and more of communicants around the sacramental board. The secret of our success is to be found in the high standard of piety provided for in our General Rules; and when that standard is given up—when as a Church we lose our distinction from the world and court its favor, and make a wholesale alliance with its spirit and customs and evils, not only ceasing to avoid evil, but neglecting to do good—when we do this, then our glory will have departed, and the hope of humanity will depend on the rising up of some modern Luther or Wesley to lead it back to God and heaven.

I appeal to you to-day, as a part of the Methodist family, and I beseech you as a congregation, to strive to bring your personal piety up to the standard laid down in our General Rules. Resolve that you will be a praying, active, holy people, and then will the hidings of God's power be with you indeed. It was this that made Methodism a great moral power a century ago, and it is this that will make it a power in the world to the end of time.

The burden of Wesley's preaching was holiness and usefulness, and as he preached this gospel of reformation, he led the way in his experience and

practice. The great doctrines he preached are the same to-day as then. While we continue steadfast in our belief of them, let us keep ever before us the two great objects to which they point. If Methodism will do this, the world will acknowledge her claims. She will need no presentation of them by bishop or priest, for they will assert themselves. To-day the prayers of millions ascending from her altars assert them, and declare that her mission is not yet accomplished. Her people are no longer the despised people on whom political pride looked down with scorn a hundred years ago. She has outlived the rage and malice which sought to strangle her in her cradled innocence; the child of the storm has outlived the tempest, and to-day sends her forgiving salutations to the mother that oppressed her, and her best wishes that that mother would forget all else in her desire to make men holy and useful.

Holiness and usefulness were the watch-word of our fathers. They have constituted the battle-cry of our Church in all her conflicts with sin and Satan, and I pray God that they will continue to ring out from the field of strife until her lengthening lines shall hail the breaking splendor of the millennial morn.

O followers of our ascended founder, stand in the way and catch his descending mantle! Hold on to the holiness and usefulness to which he called you and in which he led the way.

From the beginning we have been opposed, even as Christ was opposed, yet our foot-prints are seen

on every continent on the globe. Those last words of the dying Wesley, "The best of all is, God is with us," still ring along our ranks, and burn brightly on the folds of our standard sheet. O brethren, while I bid Godspeed to any religious communion that seeks the salvation of sinners, I love with my whole heart that form of Christianity with which when a boy I linked my earthly fortunes, and which when I was eighteen years old commissioned me to preach the glorious gospel of Christ. I love it for the good it has wrought for the world, as well as for the good it has wrought for me; for although it is but yesterday, it has filled innumerable graves with its happy dead, and sends out ten thousand times ten thousand living voices to swell its songs of triumph here below. From the great deep of my heart I can say, and O that in this you all would accompany me:

If e'er my heart forget
Her welfare or her woe,
Let every joy this heart forsake
And ev'ry grief o'erflow;
For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my toils and cares be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.

God grant that having had a youth-time of incredible hardships, yet of unparalleled success, we may never forget the secret of our power, and that when even a hundred centennial crowns shall hang upon the hoary locks of our Zion, like the prophet on Nebo she may still look heavenward with eye undimmed and strength unabated!

Making Void the Law of God.

“They have made void thy law.” Psalm cxix. 126.

IT is no pleasant task to attempt to determine the meaning of these words, and it is still less pleasant to apply their fearful meaning to those we love. They contain a grave indictment against the sinner for impiety—an indictment against many of you, for whose salvation I pray daily. You are solemnly charged in the text with having committed a high offense against the honor of God. It is alleged that you are living in a way that defeats the end for which his law was given. It was given as your rule of life—as a way-bill from time to eternity—as a directory which, if followed, will lead to happiness and usefulness in this life and to eternal blessedness in the life to come. It was given that you might be saved from sin. It sets forth the atonement made for sin and the conditions on which the sinner can be made a sharer in its benefits. It gives plain and simple rules for regulating his life so as to please God, and be prepared for death. In a word, the great end and object of the law, in the sense we are now considering it, is his salvation. You are charged in the text with pursuing a course

of conduct that is making this law powerless to save you—with living so as to make utterly void this great agency which a merciful God has provided for your salvation. This is the high offense for which you stand indicted before the court of conscience and truth, and of which, painful as the admission is to me, I solemnly believe you are guilty. Now, if it be true that you are guilty of this grave offense, there is but one hope for you, and that hope centers in Christ, who is exceeding abundant in mercy. But even this hope rests upon a condition, and that condition is such a personal consciousness of guilt as will lead you in penitence to Christ as humble suppliants for his pardon.

I stand here to prosecute you on the indictment brought against you in the text. Not as your enemy, not in vindictiveness, O no! but as your friend, and in sorrowing sympathy, I charge you with making void the law of God. It is an awful crime, and if not followed by repentance unto salvation its inevitable penalty will be separation from God and happiness, and, by consequence, remorse and anguish intolerable forever. There is not the shadow of a doubt on my mind as to your guilt. I know that if ever pardoned it must be in time, that if you die unrepentant and unforgiven, you will have to endure the terrible wrath of God eternally. I know too that although here now you may never be here again—that you may die before the next Sabbath service—that this may, by possibility, be our last interview, and I would do all I can to convince you of your guilt,

and to persuade you to seek for pardon, and to seek for it at once.

The accusation is that you have made void the law of God ; that notwithstanding he has graciously provided to save you, you are making that provision of no use to you—are, in fact, defeating the great purpose of God, in the gift of his Son and in the revelation of his truth, which was that you might be led to salvation. The point now is to make you sensible of this, and I know not that this can better and more successfully be done than by holding up to your view a given course of conduct by which the law of God is made void, and then leaving it to your consciousness as to whether you are following that course or not.

In what way now may it be said that a man makes the law of God—the provisions of grace revealed in the gospel—of no use to him? How is this done? What are the ordinary methods by which this may be done, and by which it is done?

1. In answer to this question, I would say, first, that the most successful way of making the law of God void is by unbelief. That law, being made up of regulations for right living, can become operative only through faith. That is to say, it must not only be revealed but believed and adopted as the rule of life. For a man therefore, from intellectual pride or from vanity, or from inward corruption and hostility to God, to reject the gospel as a revelation from God, and to publish his determination to walk simply by the light of reason and according to his own depraved passions, is at once, and beyond all ques-

tion, to make that revelation powerless to save him. That man who avows himself an infidel completely and effectually makes void the law. He places himself beyond the pale of its benefits; and so much of the marvelous does this involve that it seems to me to be barely possible that any sane man can reach the point where he may be said to have yielded up all belief in revelation. I can see how he may go so far as to have horrible and disquieting doubts of the truth of revelation, and may even persuade himself that the weight of evidence is against its truth, yet it seems to me impossible that there should be found in Christendom one man utterly destitute of faith in the Christian religion. I am satisfied of one thing—that if a man has become involved in honest doubt on this question, and will give the claims of religion a fair and unprejudiced examination, he will find the weight of evidence abundantly in favor of its truth. The evidences of its truth are so mighty and so accumulating that unbelief must give way where the examination is conducted in candor and fairness.

Most of the infidelity of modern times results from an aversion to religion rather than from a conviction of the mind. Men do not want to believe it true, because if true it is a loud condemnation of their lives. They therefore seize upon its mysteries and its abuses, and without investigation and in the face of the protesting instinct of their souls, delude themselves into a condition of doubt which as effectually makes void the law of God, so far as it relates to their salvation, as would a condition of

settled relief which had been arrived at by the most logical and satisfying processes of examination. I know not that any of you who are on trial in this suit have reached this final stage of unbelief; but if you have, I ask you, as you value your soul, to put aside prejudice and your natural enmity to God and consider calmly and searchingly the position you have taken. Are you perfectly satisfied to depend on this unbelief in the dying-hour, and to hazard what is beyond death upon it? Do not evade the question, but look it squarely in the face. Can you even now, in the full flush of manhood, with the warm blood and the bounding pulse giving attraction to life, and holding death as something afar off—can you, I say, from this stand-point of health and hope, and supported only by unbelief, think calmly and without any sort of fear of the rigid limb, the glazed eye, the folded hands and the stilled heart? Can you think of the shroud, the coffin, the devouring worm, and the long night of darkness into which you must descend, without an inward misgiving as to the unbelief with which you say you are satisfied? Can you follow the widowed soul upon its unknown journey along the track of eternity without recoiling from your unbelief? O can you contemplate that solemn hour when the soft foot-fall, the hushed stillness, and the sob of some loving heart will tell that another soul is passing into the presence of God, without a secret feeling that in that trying hour your unbelief will fail you—without an instinctive consciousness that then, as the curdling blood creeps slowly and still more slowly

from the yielding citadel to the cold, death-chilled extremities, you will need this faith which you now deride—this precious law, which in your unbelief you are now making void?

O doubting one, if while I speak to you there comes up from your soul, as I know there will, a voice, a felt whisper of fear that infidelity will not sustain you when soul and body are parting, let that voice plead with you to test religion by obedience, by experience; for O if it is true, you are lost, ruined, damned forever; while if it is false, we who believe in it can never be harmed either in life, or in death, or through eternity, by our trust.

2. But there is another way by which men make void the law of God, and it consists in so interpreting that law as to make it accommodate itself to the natural impiety of the human heart. This method, while it is more common than unbelief, is not less successful. It is one that prevails widely, and no doubt has its representatives before me. Those who adopt it are entirely free from religious doubts. They can repeat every point in the creed in full confidence of its truth. They have a high respect for religion and its services. They encourage it in the community and in their families. They look upon it as the great conservator of morals and as the mightiest bulwark of liberty. They give it their patronage, and have no thought that they are living so as to shut themselves out from its saving power as effectually as the unbelieving infidel. They are doing this because of erroneous opinions as to the law of God. Error in opinion leads to error in practice. Their

theory is widely latitudinarian, and their conduct is any thing else than honoring to God's holy law. By a miserable misinterpretation of that law they bring it down to their conduct instead of bringing their conduct up to its high standard. They make it accommodative, so accommodative as to make it impossible to distinguish between religion and irreligion, between the Church and the world, between piety and impiety. Many of this class have entered the Church with these opinions, and their latitudinarianism is called liberality. In all outward respects they honor their Christian profession. They pay their money out with an open, generous hand. They seat themselves decorously in the house of God with every returning Sabbath, and kneel devoutly at the communion-table. They are zealous of the popularity of the Church, and are ambitious to see it eminently respectable; yet, notwithstanding all this, they so sadly misconstrue the requirements of the law, so loosely interpret religion as to its inward spirit, and have so accustomed themselves to hold the duties of religion in subordination to interest and fashion and the carnal desires of the heart, as, to all intents and purposes, to make void the law of God equally with the profane unbeliever. This was the class which God addressed when, by the mouth of the psalmist, he said, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." They think of the holy God, and judge of him as they think and judge of themselves. They bring him down to their own corrupt standard, and hence, although he annexes a penalty to every transgres-

sion of his law, they do not believe that he will really and rigidly enforce these penalties. They admit that his law enjoins duty, and demands fidelity in small as well as in great things; that it extends its dominion to the inner life as well as the outward, requiring, as the psalmist says, "truth in the inward parts," and pledging the justice of its author for the punishment of all who fail to meet even its smallest requirements; but they do not seem to regard God as altogether meaning what he says in these matters. They judge of him by a knowledge of themselves, and cannot bring themselves to realize that he is fearfully in earnest in what he prohibits and requires, and will hold every man to a strict account for his conduct in this world. Construing his law in this way, it is not surprising that their religious life should be one of wide latitude. Such persons are to be found in every communion in this Christian land; and although nominally members of the visible body of Christ, they belong to the world. They are in sympathy with its temper and spirit. They do business upon its basis and according to its maxims. They lead in its fashions, its customs, its amusements, and so far as the life goes are undeniably of the world. They know nothing of self-denial, of cross-bearing, of simple, unaffected, heart-felt religion, and, apart from the profession of religion, have nothing to distinguish them from the great multitude who are openly and avowedly living for the things of time and sense. They are making the unavailing effort of trying to deceive God, or they are deceiving themselves by supposing that he is

insincere in his threatenings and promises and will in the day of judgment overlook many things that he stands pledged to punish. What are they doing in all this but making void the law of God—making the gospel, which if received and obeyed is “the power of God unto salvation,” of no effect to their souls? They are not only making void the law of God to themselves, but are making it powerless in their families and in the circle of their influence, which, owing to their wealth and position, is generally large. They are the cumberers of the ground alluded to in the gospel—taking up room in the Church which but for them and their hurtful influence might be occupied by fruitful Christians; and they owe the prolongation of their unprofitable lives to the intercessions of Christ.

3. There is another class of Church-members who greatly impair the saving effects of the law of God by an habitual neglect of his sacraments and ordinances and regularly instituted means of grace.

The principal value of Church-membership is that it admits us to the enjoyment of these channels for the communication of grace and strength to the believing soul. No man can use them reverently without being profited, and no man who is fit to be a member of the Church can plead a want of qualification for using them. It is conscious need, and not worthiness as some seem to suppose, that qualifies for their use; and hence I hold that every man who really “desires to flee from the wrath to come and be saved from sin,” however imperfect he may feel his life to be, ought to use them when-

ever he has the opportunity. They have been given as helps to salvation, and to habitually neglect them is to put contempt upon God who enjoined them, and to make our growth in grace an impossibility.

There are thousands of professing Christians who are willfully and habitually neglecting one or another of the institutions or ordinances and sacraments of God. Some make the Sabbath, which he has commanded us to keep holy, their day for self-indulgence or recreation. Some make their attendance upon the ordinance of preaching wholly a matter of convenience or pleasure, and do not hesitate to neglect it without the least feeling of compunction, for reasons the most trivial and selfish and worldly—such, for instance, as the want of a fashionable bonnet or a becoming dress. Some, again, think nothing of turning their backs every month upon the holy symbols of redemption as if they had no part or lot in them. O brethren, it grieves me to see some of you as regularly as communion-day comes go away carelessly and lightly with the unbelieving multitude, when you have been invited and entreated so often to remain and unite with us in showing forth our Lord's death until his coming again. How can you find it in your hearts to so wantonly neglect his last and dying command? Where is your gratitude, that you can go out with his enemies, and like Peter say, We "know not the man?" Where is your love, that you can mingle with his murderers instead of his friends? Where is your judgment, your reason, that you can thus madly persist in a course of conduct which

can have but one result, and that is to make void the law of God—to defeat its object and end, which is your salvation? for how can it contribute to your salvation when you neglect its plainest commands and its divinely instituted means for spiritual culture and growth? O I beseech you once more to put away your false scruples, and in the spirit of humility, and in the exercise of a holy trust, make these ordinances and sacraments a joy and a comfort to your souls, instead of a standing testimony that you are making void the law of God.

So far I have been striving to show that the charge in the text embraces many of those who have a place in the Church of God.

4. I take the position now that the man who willfully refuses obedience to God's law—who, in short, disobeys the gospel and refuses to accept the salvation it offers to him—is as effectually making it void as though it had never been provided or offered. Now, if this be true, it makes every man who stands outside the pale of a Christian profession guilty of the charge presented in the text. There may be many inside that pale who are guilty, but, however that may be, it is true beyond all question that you who have willfully and deliberately, and against all the motives and considerations by which you have been entreated, refused to obey the law of God are guilty of having made void that law. You may not have culminated in impiety—may not have thrown off all restraint and published yourself to the world as an unbeliever in religion—yet you have reached that point at which desire

supplants law, where appetite and lust, instead of the law of duty, control you; and hence it may be said of you that you have as completely made void the law of God as though you had openly and defiantly denied its claims upon you.

By the law of God I mean the gospel, which from infancy up to this moment has been appealing to your fears, your gratitude, and your hopes for dominion over you. While it has told you how sin may be forgiven, it has told you how terrible will be the doom of the unrepentant and unforgiven sinner. While it has revealed the largest mercy to penitence, it has pledged the largest wrath to impenitence. While it illustrates God's love for the sinner, it publishes his hatred of sin and the certain punishment that will follow its commission. While it unveils the cross with its unparalleled love, it uncovers hell with its retributive agony. It tells you, sinner, that there, on that hill of suffering, was exhausted the entire wisdom and power of the Godhead for your salvation, and that for you now to reject that stupendous outlay in your behalf is not only to reject all that Divinity could do to save you, but is also to convert it all into an enginery for your destruction. It shows you how that by refusing to obey the gospel you compel God to the work of retribution; how that by impenitence and disobedience the sinner literally forces him to demonstrate in that sinner's eternal agony the great truth that God "out of Christ is a consuming fire." In this way the law of God appeals to your fears and leaves you without excuse. It appeals also to your grati-

tude, your hope, and your desire for happiness. What is it but a record of love, of sacrifices made, of sufferings endured, of agonies borne, and of a death submitted to for you, and submitted to under circumstances of unheard of shame and torture, and for enemies too? O sinner, what is this law, this gospel, but a testimony to the patience and long-suffering of God? What is it but a publication of his forbearance with you? What is it but a witness of the love wherewith he has loved you, who by your disobedience have made all his efforts for your salvation of no effect? What is it but an appeal to your highest hopes and your loftiest ambition? It tells you that by foregoing the ephemeral good of the present you can secure the eternal good of the future. And in calling for this, it asks you to surrender nothing of real value—nothing that reason approves or that immortality desires. It leaves you every pleasure that can be enjoyed without a blush or remembered without remorse. Its only demand is that you flee those vices whose end is death, and that you cultivate those virtues whose fragrance reaches out into eternity. And while calling for these things, it unveils a reward radiant with the splendors of eternity to encourage and animate you in the struggle for salvation. O I count it one of the glories of the gospel that while it represses all that is evil in man it gives unlimited scope to all that is noble. It appeals not only to his fears and gratitude and love, but to his high ambition, by presenting objects on which he can pour out all the mightiness of his soul and gather no-

bility through his great aspirations. It points him to a heavenly kingdom where rewards are to be graduated by works, and calls upon him to strive for the largest recompense within the gift of God. It comes to the man who is prostituting his great energies to the pursuit of bubbles that may be broken by a breath, and tells him of places of dignity, of stations of eminence, of crowns and scepters which may be won and worn in the kingdom of God, and bids him enter the list of noble competitors for these immortal prizes. This is what this law of the Lord has done for you. These are the lofty eminences to which it would direct your weary feet. O it sets before you pyramid rising above pyramid in glory, throne above throne, palace above palace; and it calls upon you to strike bravely for the loftiest, though unworthy of the lowest. In this way a merciful God has been seeking your salvation; and yet how have you met these efforts of Divine Goodness—these appeals of the gospel to your fears, your gratitude, and your hopes? The cross itself, while it tells of a love that ought to melt the most obdurate heart, is also a proclamation of wrath against those who continue in sin; and yet you listen to it as you would listen to the threats of an idiot. God's law seems to have become powerless to awaken fear, for while you are capable of being startled at the approach of temporal danger, you betray an utter insensibility in sight of eternal peril. You are capable too of gratitude toward your fellow-men, and yet you seem destitute of it toward the Giver of all good. While your sympa-

thies kindle at the kindness of a fellow-creature, they send out no response to the infinite pity and compassion and love of God. You are prompt in worldly matters to forego the enjoyments of the present in view of a larger enjoyment in the future, and yet, when the gospel promises eternal blessedness as the reward of self-denial in time, you madly refuse its offer. Fear and gratitude and hope all seem dead, and you evince a most unnatural determination to forget your immortality and to live only for this world. While God has offered you every possible good, has urged its acceptance by appeals addressed to every department of your constitution, and by considerations connected with your immortality, you remain resolutely disobedient and sinful. I appeal to you now, and ask, Is not this your attitude before God? And if it is, do not your reason and your consciousness tell you that you are making void his law—are making it utterly impossible for his gospel to save you while you remain in this attitude? I want you to feel that your disobedience has cut off every hope of salvation—has shorn the gospel of all power to save you while you continue to be disobedient—that you have by this disobedience accumulated a burden of guilt which renders your salvation impossible, and that your only hope now is in Christ. I want you to feel that guilt, and to be driven by it in penitence to him; for without penitence and confession, and a blessed trust, there can be no forgiveness. On these conditions, and these only, pardon is suspended, and the fact that they are within the

range of universal compliance should make you eager to meet them.

You stand charged in the text with having made void the law of God, and I now leave it to your conscience to condemn or acquit you. I have shown you that to disobey that law is to make it void, and I know that conscience will testify to your disobedience. The proclamation of your guilt then comes from your own souls. You are witnesses against yourselves—you are your own accusers; and my prayer to God the Father is that you may never rest until your guilt is washed away by the precious blood of Christ.

Jesus and the Sisters at Bethany.

“And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” John xi. 28.

ABOUT two miles from Jerusalem, and situated on one of the slopes of the Mount of Olives, is the little village of Bethany, where, more than eighteen hundred years ago, Jesus the Son of God and Saviour of man, who was then tabernacling in the flesh, was accustomed to share the hospitality of three of his most intimate friends—Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha.

The modern traveler, on entering this village, sees an old ruin called the Castle of Lazarus, which tradition says is the house where Lazarus and his sisters lived. Not far from the ruin is a sepulcher, where it is said he was interred, and which is now used by the Turks as an oratory, or place of prayer. Near by is the spot where they say the house of Mary Magdalene stood, and at the bottom of the hill is the Fountain of the Apostles, so called because, as tradition goes, they were accustomed to stop there and refresh themselves on their frequent journeys between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Whether these traditions be true or not, the little

village of Bethany is hallowed ground with Christians, because of its historic relation to the earthly life of the Incarnate Son of God. It was there that he rested when weary. It was there, in a pious family, that he illustrated the nature and beauty and advantages of sanctified Christian friendship; and it was there, and as a part of this illustration, that one of his most touching and overwhelming miracles was wrought, which was the restoration of Lazarus to life after he had been dead four days.

The text stands connected with that wonderful occurrence, and yet it has not been selected with any view of entering into a minute examination of what is known as the resurrection of Lazarus, the circumstances of which are well known to all New Testament readers.

My purpose is to seize upon a few of the most suggestive points connected with that event, in the hope that they may be made profitable to us who love the same Jesus that Martha and Mary loved, and whose Christian experience is subject to the same trials and variations now that characterized theirs then. They had been called to pass through a great sorrow, and in that sorrow their hopes had gone out after Jesus as their Friend and Helper. In his own way, and at a time which, however it may have involved a trial of their faith, was after all the time best for them and best for him and his great redeeming mission, he gave them the needed help. As he did then so does he do now. He knows our nature more perfectly than we who possess it know it, and hence he instructs us more by acting than

by teaching. It was so then; it is so now. He does not always send us utterances from within the veil, but rather in what he does—in those strange providences which he sends or permits, and by which, now that we have not his bodily presence, he passes visibly, and as it were personally, in our midst. He seems always to have acted on the principle that while an acquaintance with his system of truths is important to us, an acquaintance with himself is still more important. It was this that made him act as well as talk during his ministry; and it is this that makes his providences the present and visible representations of himself to his people now.

Martha and Mary, as soon as their brother sickened, sent to Jesus, saying, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." For good and sufficient reasons he did not respond immediately to this call of suffering friendship. In the meantime the brother died, and was buried. Jesus, who knew all things, and who needed not to be informed of this sad event, announced it to his disciples, and told them of his determination to visit the bereaved family. Four days after the burial he entered Bethany, and was met by Martha, on his way to the house of mourning. Passing by their interview for the present, we come at once to the text, where Martha tells Mary, who, overwhelmed in sorrow and doubt, had not gone with her sister to meet Jesus, that the Master had come, and was calling for her.

There are several things connected with this event which to my mind are highly suggestive—particularly the coming of Christ to these afflicted

and deeply bereaved sisters—his calling for Mary, and the interview that followed. These are the points in the narrative to which your attention will be directed for a short time.

“The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” This coming of Christ, let it be observed now, was in answer to prayer. It is not stated in the record how long he had been separated from his friends at Bethany. We learn, though, that for some time previous to the coming of their sorrow he had been dwelling in Bethabara, which was on the other side of the River Jordan. He was engaged there in his work of teaching the people and demonstrating his claims to the Messiahship, when the news of his friend’s illness reached him. It was there that he received the request of Mary and Martha that he would come to them. It was there, and in the midst of his work, that their prayer was laid before him. In compliance with their request he had intermitted his labors at Bethabara, had crossed the Jordan, and was journeying toward Bethany. He does not seem to have hastened to them as soon as he heard of their trouble. He set out in that direction, but he continued to work as he proceeded. The prayer from Bethany was born in anxiety and sorrow, and it no doubt touched his heart, and caused him to start toward Bethany; but the point to be remembered is that he did not hasten there. He passed through Jericho, and paused long enough to restore sight to blind Bartimeus and to bring salvation to Zaccheus and his household. Although he did not hasten, but took time to do all the work

which came in his way, he finally reached Bethany, and was in sight of the house of mourning. Now, all this is suggestive of several things worthy of our remembrance: some things which we do just as Mary and Martha did them, and lines of conduct which the Master pursues toward us just as he did toward them.

We often ask things of God without ever giving one moment's reflection upon the difficulties in the way of an immediate answer. We ask thoughtlessly and inconsiderately, without thinking how much may have to be done or suffered before what we request can be accomplished. We petition for something perhaps which requires for its fulfillment elemental changes in nature, such as the calming of seas, the ordering of the winds, the marshaling of the clouds, or the directing of the lightnings. At other times, what we ask for involves radical changes in the hearts and minds of others—changes, too, quite out of the ordinary course of things, such as the restraining of a Laban, or the softening of an Esau. Many times the things we want require the putting of restriction upon the powers of darkness, in their formidable assaults upon us, or the sending upon our feeble strength the reënforcing energies of the Holy Ghost. In fact, most of the things we ask of God require a power far above our own to be exerted before they can be granted. All prayer is born in this very human weakness, and is offered up to God in an assumed recognition of the fact that he has the power to supplement and perfect this weakness. This fact should make us

thoughtful and considerate in all our askings, and should imbue our hearts and minds with sentiments of profoundest gratitude when our requests are granted.

Another thought, suggested by the coming of Jesus to these sorrowing sisters, is that the Master always looks at the thoughts and desires of the heart rather than at the words we use in prayer. The words of Mary and Martha were, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." Now, these were very proper words, but they carried up a very improper thought; and that thought was that the Master must leave off every other engagement, lay aside every other work, and come immediately to them; and that unless he did this, he could do them no good. This thought was highly objectionable on two grounds. First, it was selfish, and meant that they must be cared for in their sorrow, no matter how many blind men should thereby have to be neglected. In the next place, it was unbelieving, and in that respect dishonoring to the divine nature of Christ. It seemed to forget that he was God, and that sight was not necessary to his knowledge. It did not consider that as God he could not only know that their brother was sick, but do all that Omnipotence could do, while yet afar off, just as well as if he were by the sick man's couch. Therefore, their thoughts came far short of the noble faith of the Roman soldier, who said to Jesus: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." But notwithstanding all these defects, the

Master saw fit to answer their request by coming; and this is suggestive of his willingness to help us, not according to our worthiness to be helped, but according to his infinite compassion—not only when all our thoughts are perfect, but also despite the selfishness and ignorance and unbelief from which it is so difficult for us to become entirely free. We see too in the manner of his coming an illustration of his sovereignty. He came, it is true, but not as they thought he would come, as to time and manner. Instead of coming at once, he delays and arrives only to find his friend in the grave and the sisters in the deepest grief. They had asked him to come to Bethany, and he is there; but the time has gone by when they had expected him, and now that he is there they gather but comparatively small comfort from his presence because of the weakness of their faith. This, I say, was an illustration of our Lord's sovereignty; yet we must not think that in this, or in any thing else, our Lord can be justly chargeable with a capricious exercise of sovereignty. He often delays to do what is asked, yet it is always for good reasons. It is always because the thing asked for ought not then to be given, or because the petitioners are not yet prepared to receive it with profit. The case under review shows this. Look at it now. Suppose that he, by a simple exercise of his divine power, had healed Lazarus without leaving Bethabara; or suppose that, in consideration of their anxiety and the defectiveness of their faith, he had gone immediately to Bethany, and by an exercise of his miraculous power had

restored the sick man to perfect health in a moment, as Mary and Martha evidently desired and expected him to do. In either instance, it would have been only another of those ordinary works to which he was devoting himself, and by which he was stamping his wondrous life with divinity. But by delaying the time of his arrival he prepared the way for an extraordinary manifestation of that divinity. This delay, instead of being a mere caprice of sovereignty, had a noble purpose that fully justified him, and which is a complete vindication of him against the charge of insensibility to the claims of friendship. By delay, the emergency had time to deepen and ripen, and an arena was prepared by it for a more illustrious and commanding manifestation of his power and grace than could possibly have been made in either of the instances just referred to. It furnished an ample opportunity for him to enter the lists with death and the grave, and to openly and gloriously triumph over them before his own temporary subjection to their power. Look too at the good results by which this delay was to be followed. It became the means of confirming his disciples in the faith by which they were to conquer the world. It was an exhibition of power before which the unbelief of the people gave way. Yea, it was this great miracle, wrought in the vicinity of Jerusalem, their stronghold, that precipitated the counsels of the rulers and priesthood, in regard to his death. These were some of the momentous consequences of delay in answering prayer in this instance, and they summon us to wait patiently un-

der the delays which may mark God's course as to our supplications in this day. If, when we send out our longing desires after him in the day of trouble, he does not hasten to our relief, let us not think him indifferent to our sorrows, or unable to comfort us. We must learn from this incident to pray on and faint not. If the promise tarry, we must wait for it in patience and in hope. When you shake the tree by prayer and the fruit does not fall at once, instead of being discouraged you must take it for granted that the fruit is not ripe and wait until it is. But the tardy coming of Christ to the mourning household at Bethany teaches us how severe a trial it is to have our askings followed by delay on the part of the great Giver. This delay is always an ordeal, and there are but few persons that get through it without sin. When these sisters found that Jesus did not come to their help as soon as he received their prayer, they counted it as lost—as wasted breath, and as useless labor. It is true, when, after their brother was dead and in his grave, Jesus drew near to Bethany, Martha went out to meet him; but she went with a cold, sorrowing, hopeless heart in her bosom. The words with which she greeted him—"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died"—were the echo of a vanished hope, the ashes of a dead faith. It was as though she had said: "You could have shielded us from this terrible calamity, but you would not; and now it is too late, for he is dead and buried." Jesus came under a consciousness that he had done all for the best; and this, coupled with the knowledge

that she would soon see and acknowledge that even his delay was in wisdom and goodness, made him oblivious to the cutting reproach which her words conveyed. Instead of rebuking her for her want of faith, he proceeds at once to the work of attempting to rekindle the dying flame by saying to her, "Thy brother shall rise again." But the poor mourner's sun of faith is too much in eclipse to apprehend his meaning. Her heart is in the grave where they have laid her brother. Her only thought is that he is dead, that a heavy stone shuts him from her loving eyes, and that corruption has already begun to mar the flesh on which she had but a few days before gazed so fondly. Her lips move, and she answers, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Her grasp was upon this last plank left for the surviving love in the shipwreck that death brings—the final resurrection. To this the God-man calmly replies, "I am the resurrection and the life," which was as if he had said, "In me is all life, so that even now I have the power to restore your brother to that life from which death has released him." He challenges her faith by the question, "Believest thou this?" to which her mourning trust responds, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God, which should come into the world." For a moment her faith seems about to recover itself, to arise from the dust into which delay had cast it. "I know," she cried out, "that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee!" In this cry, though, she shows that

her trust in Christ is only secondary—that she does not center her hopes in him primarily, but in God, and in him the Son only as he might have access to the Father by prayer. Her faith was vague, when it should have been distinct, direct, and undoubting; and instead of laying hold upon the consolation offered, it wavered and turned backward toward darkness and unbelief. Her soul was troubled, and in its trouble fluctuated with alternate emotions. Like a ship in a storm, she in one moment seemed to bound up to the very gate of heaven, and in the next moment seemed almost, ingulfed in the abyss of despair; and in all this alternation she stood as a type of the millions who since then have been tempest-tossed and tempest-driven by the slowness with which, and for their good too, God gives answers to human prayers. O it is so hard to trust him when he tarries! It is so natural for us to think that the prayer which is not answered in the moment of its going up is lost; and yet how trying to the Master must all this be! Amid it all, though, he goes straight on in his way, neither overleaping nor putting aside the obstacles which cross his path. O brethren, this is grace! This is that love that goes on in well-doing though it meet only with evil. This is that love which human weakness never provokes, and which human ignorance never wearies. It suffers long, and is always kind. It is the love which but one, and only one, has fully and unchangingly exhibited; and that one is Christ the Saviour of sinners. In his great name, and as his representative, and by his authority and life, I dare

to tell you that if you have opened the door for him by prayer, be sure that he will come to you, even as he came to the sisters at Bethany, notwithstanding your many failings and your innumerable short-comings.

But we pass from the conversation of Martha with Jesus to the summons which he sends to Mary, after he was actually come, notwithstanding his long delay. The language of Martha was, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

Mary was constitutionally unlike her sister. Martha was quick, impulsive, and eager to act. Mary was slow, thoughtful, meditative, and less excitable. Like Martha, she had requested Christ to come, had expected him to come, and had been disappointed that he did not come at once; but unlike Martha, she could not suddenly recover from the disappointment. She perhaps was last to lose confidence in him, and last to recover it after it had once been shaken. It is more than probable that she more fully than Martha believed that he would come; and hence, when doubt was once planted in the soil of her quiet, loving, meditative soul, it took deeper root than it did in the shallow soil of her sister's more superficial nature. I hold that it was far easier for Martha to recover her lost confidence than Mary, and that it was this instinctive knowledge which Jesus possessed of this difference in their characters that caused him to call especially for Mary. He knew how entirely her reflective mind had trusted in him, how entirely she had loved him, how confidently she had asked him to

come to them in their great trouble, how undoubtedly she had day after day expected him, and how utterly overwhelmed by despair her poor stricken and disappointed soul was when she saw that her brother was dead—dead too because of the absence of Him she loved, and who alone could have kept him alive. O it is agony supreme, it is wretchedness beyond expression, for a nature of this kind to trust and be disappointed. It is so in the common friendships of life, and the agony is increased a hundred-fold when God is the object of doubt. The soul then becomes a captive, and sits in loneliness and solitude, bound in coils of its own weaving. It is utterly bereft of consolation, for it has separated itself from the fountain of all comfort. Without faith it becomes only a prisoner of hope—a hope too that has no place of anchorage, that is adrift upon a stormy sea, with no holding place amid the tempest. This was the condition of Mary as she sat there in sorrow over her loss, and in bitter remembrance that He whom she had so entirely trusted had failed her in the great hour of her suffering and need.

But Jesus was not unmindful of her. Although she refused to go forth with Martha to meet him, and showed by her stony, listless manner that her faith in him was gone, he did not forsake her. He had compassion on her poor blind soul, which refused to see unless with the eye of sense; and as she would not come voluntarily, as her more impulsive sister had, he called for her, determined that she should be an eye-witness to what would

be not only a proof of his friendship, but a demonstration of his divinity. Here, brethren, was grace—infinite, condescending grace—in the absence of all fitness or worthiness in the object to receive it. And how often has he manifested this grace to us in our doubts and fears! We sometimes sit still in our sorrow when our bounding feet should be seeking him; and yet, in our unworthy distrust, he often condescends to call us. His voice comes to us in his Word, in his Spirit, and in his providences, as distinctly as it came to Mary through the lips of her sister, saying, “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”

Let us pass now from the call to the meeting of Mary and the Master whom she doubted.

There she sat, in her silent grief and stony agony, nursing her sorrow, and raising around her shadows of unbelief which cut off all consolation; but as soon as she received the Master’s summons, she arose and came to him at once, and her prompt obedience was followed, as obedience always is, by immediate relief. Martha having found comfort in the words of Jesus, was anxious that Mary should find it also. In the fullness of her heart she went back to the solitary mourner, and said, “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” That was enough. The poor doubter knew then that she was not entirely forgotten, nor utterly forsaken. “As soon as she heard it”—that is, the summons—“she arose quickly, and came unto him.” The spell is broken at once, and the prisoner of hope is free—made free by the simple word of her Lord and

Master. How suggestive this is of the power of that precious Word to remove our doubts and to comfort us in our sorrows, even as the word of Christ did for Mary! Her trouble was inward, and she had borne it silently. It had led her down into the worst of all bondage—the bondage of fear and doubt. The cords of a great temptation were tightening around her, and it was at a moment when she was struggling in the hot clutches of despair that the word of her Lord brought deliverance. His summons too was only the beginning of the goodness he had in store for her, as the narrative shows.

They passed from the place of meeting to the grave; and as they stood there, the great Sorrow-bearer of humanity mingled his tears with Mary's. Ah, how those precious drops testified to the depth of his sympathy! and how completely they vindicated him against the doubts that Mary had cherished! Even the spectators were affected by the scene, and said, "Behold how he loved him!" Those tears of her sympathizing Lord washed out her last lingering doubt and fear, and prepared her for that fullness of joy which she felt when at the word of the Lord her brother was brought back to life and to the love of his sorrowing sisters.

Their prayer was answered, but not as they had expected. It was answered in his own divine way—that is, exceeding abundantly above all that they asked or thought.

In their great trouble they had applied to him for help. He had seen fit to delay his answer to this

call. This delay they had failed to understand, and had fostered feelings of bitterness and distrust toward him. In the face of all these suspicions he had gone on, working out his ministry of love in his own way; and now, as they sit there in their happy home listening to the tones of their risen brother's voice, or drinking in lessons of heavenly wisdom from the lips of their wonder-working Friend, Jesus of Nazareth, the measure of their faith and joy more than compensated for their doubts and sorrows when that brother had sickened and died.

This whole narrative suggests the fact that when our emergencies are greatest, divine help may be expected to be most abundant. Our emergencies are like streams crossing the traveler's path; some are small, and may be passed without much difficulty; others are large—are swollen by sorrow—have spread out over the banks, and bring us to a pause, like that which arrested Martha and Mary in their Bethany home. In these great emergencies, our only hope is in God. In these times of trouble, we should go out to him in prayer; yet when we send for him, it should be in trust and with a firm purpose to hold fast our confidence, even should he tarry awhile; for the Scriptures furnish us many examples to show us his delays are often his greatest mercies. He often hides his face for a time, and our past experiences, if we will only turn to them in sorrows, assure us that his hidings are as full of love as his manifested presence. When our way is intercepted by smaller streams, he sends us

his precious promises *as* so many boats to bear us across the raging waters. We must have that trust that will constrain us to commit ourselves to these boats, and that will make us courageous as we look out upon the threatening elements. We must obey his voice, as Mary did. That will or word tells us that although we may neither see nor hear him, he is never "far from us at any time."

I thank God, brethren, that our God is everywhere, and that it is possible for a true faith to recognize his hand and presence in every event of life. It is this faith in him, whether he is present or absent, that makes his children tranquil and hopeful in every state and condition of life. They know him, and this knowledge gives them confidence, an ever-increasing confidence, in him. And as they that go down upon the deep and are overmastered by storms in the darkness of the night, knowing not on what strange shores they may be thrown, cast anchor and wait for the day, so, in the midst of trial and temptation, when the storm is fierce and the night is dark, when the lights are quenched and the signals gone, his children can at least cast anchor; and they may know too that if they wait in faith and hope for the day, it will surely dawn. O there never was a night so long that the day did not overtake it; there never was a morning without its morning-star; there never was a day without a sun. In these dark, tempestuous nights do not despair, but wait for the morning with its beautiful star and shining sun.

When trouble enters your home, as it entered the

home at Bethany, send messages to the faithful Friend ; for he loves you. If he come not at once, listen to the whisperings of Faith, who will tell you that although he tarries he loves you. If you hear his voice calling you, go quickly and meet him ; for he loves you, and calls you but to comfort you as he did Mary—exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think.

The Need of Religion.

“But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Luke x. 42.

THE discourse this morning was on the nature of religion as the one great need of humanity. Religion, or a religious state, was defined as a condition of absolute dependence on, of perfect trust in, and of constant communion with God; and the object of the discourse was to explain and enforce these terms. I propose this evening to address you on the *need* of religion. Our Lord speaks of it as the one needed thing of life. “But one thing is needful,” is his language.

It was a need so great, so pressing, and so all-embracing and immediate, as to leave no other want of humanity worthy of being called a need, in his estimation. He seemed to think that for a man to contemplate this in its true significance and importance, would cause him to forget his minor wants, and to neglect every thing else until this demand of his soul, and that for all eternity too, was fully and satisfyingly met. And yet—alas that it should be so!—the great majority of persons leave this to the last. They will not recognize its importance. They will not solemnly ponder the necessity of re-

ligion—their need of it not only when they get sick or are about to die, but *now*, while in health, and as the great regulator and sweetener of life. Especially are the young thoughtless at this point. They think of religion as of something opposed to their happiness, and therefore not to be cultivated until the bright days of youth have mellowed into the summer of manhood, or become tinged with the fading hues of autumn, or whitened with the frosts of winter. Then, say they—when the silver cord is being loosened, and the golden bowl is about to be broken—then we will cultivate the solemnities of religion and make preparation for eternity.

I tried to show you this morning that religion was happiness instead of gloom ; that it was liberty instead of bondage ; that it was the only thing that could bring security and satisfaction to young and old. I come to-night to dwell on its necessity ; and may God our Father open your hearts to my message, and make it as the winning chimes of an angel's song to these young, listening souls !

And now, in dwelling on this great need of humanity, I shall not pause to consider the connection between religion and the prosperity of a nation, although the question is one of momentous interest, and its discussion, under other circumstances, might be profitable. Neither shall I inquire into the moral necessity of religion, as a remedial scheme for human salvation ; for I take it for granted that you all admit this.

My purpose is to consider the demands which every human heart has for religion in this present

life, our need of it *now*, and all through life as the great factor in the system of human happiness and usefulness and safety. I want to show that you need it in the regulation of your passions, in the training of your minds, in the cultivation of your affections, and in preparing yourselves for the life that now is and for the life to come. I want to show you that in this sense we all need it, but that in these respects it is especially needed by the young, and that for them to neglect it is to make life a final failure, and eternity an unending agony. I shall therefore address myself first to them.

In you, my young friends, and at your age, susceptibility and imagination predominate over reason and reflection. It is the season of impulse, the age of thoughtlessness. It is true, passion has not yet matured into the ripeness and tyranny which it often gains over persons more advanced in life; but it has more of freshness, more of impatience, and is therefore more difficult to restrain. You have not yet learned from experience the fatal effects of sinful indulgence, and are therefore without the caution that experience teaches. You have not even fully learned the vanity of human hopes, the falseness of so much that seems fair, and the disappointments with which human life abounds. Life has been passed by you amid a succession of beautiful illusions, each of which wore to your young, trusting natures the seeming of reality.

Ah! it is indeed the golden season of the soul, this season of youth; and as I sometimes look at the young, and see them so innocent of ill, so con-

finding in affection, and so hopeful of good—as I mingle with them, and look upon the blushing cheek and beaming eye; as I hear your glad voices and witness your wild ebullience of joy, so fraught with impulse, and so like the songs of birds in spring—I catch the illusion, and feel as if “I were a boy again.” Ah! well do I remember the season when, like many now before me, I stood upon the portals of life’s beautiful temple, and gazed yearningly adown its untrodden aisles—when, like the youth in Cole’s picture of the voyage of life, I stood upon the vessel, as it floated on in the morning sunshine, straining the vision and stretching the arm toward the distant temple of honor and hope. I have not forgotten the banks all covered with flowers, and the hills all tinted with vermillion, which so filled me with gladness then. These things are as fresh in my memory to-night as though they were of yesterday; and it is this memory that saddens me, as I look upon you, my young friends, and think that in the absence of religion many of you will be doomed to weep when you might have smiled, and to mourn when you might have rejoiced.

O that I could persuade you to draw your happiness in the morning of life from that fountain which never runs dry! O that I could influence you to put away that infatuation which tells you to postpone your return to God until your earthly hopes are dead, and age, with its infirmities, is upon you! How can you, with so much to awaken your gratitude and bind you to God, put him away from your thoughts and live for a world which will con-

tinually mock and deceive you? and yet this is the choice that some of you have made, and in which you seem content. And above all, how can woman—she whose organization seems so exquisitely attuned to religion, and whose very helplessness invites it—how can she, whose very nature is love, withhold her heart when the holy and infinite God demands it? To me, the saddest of all spectacles is a worldly, irreligious woman; and the sadness deepens when the subject of it is young.

Let me give you a picture; and the picture is not all fancy, for there are those here who give it reality. There before me is a young maiden with the glow of summer's dawn upon her cheek, with the brightness of heaven's sun upon her brow, and the depth of heaven's starlight in her eyes. There she is, with the gladness of innocent maidenhood in her heart, or it may be the lights and shadows, the ecstasies and sorrows of approaching womanhood flitting athwart her bosom in visions of dreamy, undefined, but most impassioned prophesies. I see her going forth in the early morning to her school tasks, with a step so light that it scarcely bends the flowers beneath her feet. I see her again in the school-room, smoothing back the truant ringlet from her brow and poring over her lessons, yet dreaming wildly of the tinted future. Behold her again as she glides through the mazes of the dance, with step so graceful yet so vital, or as she moves amid the endearments of home and the sanctities of friendship—so calm in countenance, so simple in manner, yet so profound in feeling, so

fathomless in enthusiasm, so little comprehended by others, and such a mystery even to herself. Behold her in all these phases of life, and ask yourself, Can it be possible that one so full of hope, yet so exposed to danger, and so destined to change, can consent to lavish the first, fresh fragrance of her life on sin and self, and then, when the festal lights have ceased to burn, and the music that once charmed falls dead upon the heart, will come and offer herself, a miserable bankrupt, to Him who had flooded her young life with so much of sunshine?

For woman to do this is to belie her tenderness, her gratitude, her whole loving nature; it is to make her an ingrate, a thing to be shunned and abhorred, because of the perversion of her very organization, which is essentially religious.

O what is woman? what her smile,
Her lips of love, her eyes of light?
What is she if her lips revile
Her dying Lord?
Love may write
His name upon her marble brow,
May linger in her curls of jet;
The bright spring grass may scarcely bow
Beneath her feet; and yet,
Without that meeker grace, she is
A lighter thing than vanity."

I tell you all that religion, if ever needed, is needed in your youth-time—is needed especially by those of you who have known but little of care and sorrow. Possessed as you are with impulsive natures, and urged on by sensibility and imagination, what, I ask, is more needful to prevent a ship-

wreck of your hopes than the serenity of religion, the sobriety and steadiness of deep-founded principle, the strong and lofty aim of imperishable virtue?

And if religion be so necessary to those who know neither care nor sorrow, how much more needful is it to the young who have found life, even in its beginning, thronged with troubles? The season of youth is not always a time of undisturbed happiness. It has its disappointments, its bitter jealousies, its broken friendships; its cold treatment—sometimes from kindred, and at home; its chains of restraint and of poverty, of dependence and toil; its conscious mediocrity; its failure to share the prizes which, held out to ambition, are seized and borne off by others; and with these comes the crushing thought that either for want of fortune, or talent, or distinguished parentage, or beauty, the meed of admiration for which all young souls yearn is withheld. The feelings become morbid. They feel that no one cares for them; that even parents are cold and distant and hard; that they are not appreciated as they deserve to be.

This is a common state of mind with young men who come to the city to earn their bread by honest toil. A sensation of loneliness possesses them. Next comes a feeling of disquiet. Persuaded that nobody cares for them, they cease to care for themselves, and are found yielding little by little to the seductive wiles of the tempter. Cut loose almost entirely from society, and from religious influences, they are left without power to resist temptation.

They soon become reckless, and with no cords of kindly sympathy to hold them back, they plunge at last into the wildest dissipation and profligacy, and are soon lost to all good and dead to all virtue.

Is not this the history of many a young man of high promise in early life? Cannot some of you here to-night recall just such a history—a history which began in joy, but ended in fearful tragedy? Young man, may not this be your history? “One thing” is needed; and without that one essential conservator of character, the chances for a safe conduct through your youth-time are all against you. O hear my counsel and ponder my warning! If you give yourself up to the guidance of passion and appetite; if, from love of sin, you renounce prayer and yield yourself to a life of sensual enjoyment; if you refuse to take the Word of God as your directory, and the restraints of religion as your protection—you will find the conflicting passions of your nature and the severe temptations from without by which you will be assailed more than you can resist. The foundations of your hopes of usefulness and happiness will be uptorn, and your life will prove as the light of a wandering star, going out at last amid the blackness of despair and the darkness of desolation.

O you need religion both in the joyous hours and in the weeping-time of youth. Nothing else can safely guide you, can adjust and harmonize your nature, can make your lives grand and blessed, and finally conduct you to the bosom of God. “One thing is needful.” O that I could persuade you all

to seek that one thing before the time comes when "the evil days and the years draw nigh," and you will say, "I have no pleasure in them!"

But religion is no less needed in manhood and womanhood than in youth. This may be regarded as the midway stand-point of human life. In youth, we have eyes only for what is in the future. At that period we have no past, except childhood, which, because of its blankness, fails to arrest our attention. Our gaze, therefore, is all upon what is to come. It is different, though, in middle life. We look then both forward and backward—into our future and past. We subdue our anticipations of the future by recurring to our experience in the past, thus checking what in youth would have hurried us on unresistingly. We still hope, but our hope has less of enthusiasm than once. In youth, the light of hope falls around us with the freshness and sparkle of the morning sun; in middle life, it comes to us as the light of sunshine falling through the stained glass of some vast cathedral, and shedding a mournful beauty around chancel and altar.

If life up to that period has been, as it has with many, fraught with disappointment, with lack of success in business, with failure in our plans and hopes, or with want of appreciation; if the man has trusted and been deceived; if his early visions, like the hues of the rainbow, have grown dim and at last faded, leaving him only the cold, leaden sky; if he has suffered and yearned for sympathy, but failed to find it even where he of right expected it—thus circumstanced, if he is without that resig-

nation which a firm trust in God gives, he will fall into a bitter, distrustful spirit, fatal to all happiness here and all hope hereafter.

But suppose he has been successful in life. Does that diminish his danger, or make religion less needful? No. If a man is successful in worldly accumulation, in the pursuit of honor, or in the devisal of additional elegances or luxuries for the æsthetic or sensual nature, his very successes only increase his desire for more. With this increased desire comes a diminished condition of conscience, and as a consequence, less simple as to how he can add new supplies to his store. His thoughts become more worldly, his affections more earthly, his sensibilities more blunted, and his conscience more hardened, until, for want of a deeply implanted and controlling religious principle, God is finally dethroned from his soul, heaven is abjured in his practice, and self is set up as the worshiped divinity.

But I will suppose—for I want to meet every possible case before me—I will suppose, I say, that success has not made him selfish and unprincipled, and I contend that even that will not make religion less necessary to him as a means of happiness. I hold that from the very fact that he has retained his sensibility and conscience unimpaired, he is more in need of religion as a source of happiness than if he were less noble in nature, and, as a consequence, less susceptible of remorse for wrongdoing. Let us contemplate him in this character for a moment. There he is—the favored child of fortune—a successful, honorable, yet worldly man.

In the midst of his most brilliant successes he recalls the feelings which former successes brought him, and remembers how little solid happiness they ever secured. As he looks out upon some new enterprise to which he is invited, he says, "What though I succeed? Suppose I could add millions to my wealth, or bind my brow with newer and fresher garlands, or fill my cup of pleasure with a brighter and more sparkling nectar. What real good will it all bring? What great aspiration will it supply? Will it not all be, as it has been before, the plaything of an hour, the joy of a moment, to be succeeded as others were by satiety and disgust?"

Ah, what a cheerless light do successes in wealth, in ambition, and in pleasure kindle for such a man! How his heart grows old and weary, and almost dead, amid all his acquisitions! These very acquisitions, if they find him without God and without hope, wear to him in his thoughtful hours a mournful shadow. He knows that in a little while he must give them all up, and that in the life to come they can buy for him neither peace nor blessedness.

Ah! say what you will, but the soul is lonely without religion—lonely in the midst of all its worldly abundance. O the soul—the immortal soul—what is it? and what can make it happy? It is a deep, unsounded abyss. What line can fathom it? It is a stormy, midnight chaos. What light can dispel its gloom? It is a vast prison-house, voiced with groans and sobbing agonies. What power can still these groans and hush these agonies? Where, O

where, can the immortal and burdened soul turn for rest?

Let the past answer, and with united voice, it says, "Turn to God for rest." This answer comes from the charnel-house of buried centuries. The dead give it from the dust of their old graves. O could the millions who have gone to the tomb awake and speak to you to-night, with skeleton fingers they would point upward, and say, "Turn to God for happiness!" Separated from him, the soul is dark—darker than would be the universe without a sun. Take the day-god from his throne of fire, and what would be the result?

The stars

Would wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless and pathless, and the icy earth would
Swing blind and black'ning in the moonless air.

The clouds would perish, the very winds would wither, and the universe itself be turned to darkness. But darker and more desolate still is the soul without God, with no Father, no home, no heaven; and this is the awful gloom which many of you are inviting. "One thing is needful." It is needed now—needed in your youth, needed in your manhood, and will be needed by your forever. O that you would all seek it, and that you would seek it now!

If, now, religion be necessary to the safety and happiness of the young, and if, as I have shown, it be essential to the security and comfort of the middle-aged, who can doubt its importance to the old? I need not argue this point, for you all admit it.

The young and the middle-aged may be so beguiled by pleasure and immersed in business as to fail to recognize their present interest in this subject; but if you ask them what they think of it in its relations to old people, they will all say, with one accord: "Yes, the aged ought to attend to it—ought to have religion as their stay and comfort amid the stumbling and perishing of life." And it is true.

To me, there is something sad beyond all expression in the spectacle of old age unsolaced by a hope of heaven. Let us look at such a man for a moment. He may be here to-night. If so, may God's Spirit touch his heart, while I try to draw his picture as it is.

There he stands—the old, irreligious, world-weary man. The goal of manhood was long since reached and passed. The fires of his youth have died out, leaving only the gray, smoldering embers. The pulses beat faint and low. The blood, which once went bounding through his veins, now creeps languidly to the heart, and is sent feebly back from the citadel to the outposts. The limbs have grown tremulous, and the frame tottering. The eye has retreated into its cavernous depths, and burns with a pale, dim light; while the poor, palsied body bends earthward, as if instinctively meeting the dust with which it is soon to mingle. The friends of his youth are all dead, and he moves the last, perhaps, of his generation. His wife is among the silent sleepers, and the most of his children lie with folded hands in scattered church-yards. The lengthening shadows, as they fall mournfully around,

tell that the orb of his life has almost reached the sunset hour. The few kindred left him watch the retiring light as it purples the gathering clouds, with a longing desire to stay its departure; but it wanes and wanes, and must soon drop, like a spark, and go out in the ocean of eternity. There he stands on the dividing summit between time and eternity, and is about to pass it to return no more forever. Memories of the green vale that lies far back in his youth-time come to him now like the faint echoes of music that is flown. Thoughts of the companions who walked with him in that beautiful season wander dreamily through his mind. Snatches of songs sung in the olden time come back as the chimes of far-off bells. He looks back upon the hills up which, in company with the companions of his youth, he toiled; and mournful now is the remembrance that in climbing them he spent the best energies of his life—seeking what men call wealth and distinction, but which have proved to him but bubbles on the wave.

These seasons, these friends, these hopes, are gone—all gone—and there the old man stands, deserted of all when most in need of help. There he is, separated from the sympathies of the living, linked only with a dead generation—dying himself, with no religion, no interest in Jesus, no hope of heaven. Where, I ask, can the imagination summon a picture more gloomy, more miserable, more absolutely and hopelessly wretched? There he stands, at the very portal of eternity, with no heavenly guide to conduct him to where

Withered age may bloom again,
Bright through the eternal years of God.

What is such a man but a wreck upon the surf-beaten shore of life—a ruin on the beetling cliffs of time, tottering to its fall, and soon to be engulfed forever?

And now, my dear friends, my task is nearly ended. It only remains for me to urge you to choose this “one thing needful,” and to tell you that it is the only abiding thing in time and in eternity. It is that good part which shall not be taken away from us. It will stay with us amid the changes of this sorrowful life—making us rich in our poverty and giving us comfort in our troubles; and it is the only thing that will abide with us in the awful hour of death.

O I want something that will stay with me then, something on which I can lean my feeble soul in that fearful hour, something that will shelter the poor, unhoused spirit when it goes out upon its unknown and endless journey!

O friends, it is a sad thing to die, even when death comes to conduct us to the bosom of God. To leave this goodly world; to look no more on its shining sun, its silent stars, and its all-embracing sky; to tread no more its green valleys, nor listen to the voices of its birds, nor feel the soft breath of its summer winds; to leave the friends with whom we have been so happy—the friends so tried and true—and our children, whom we love more than we love life; to give up all—God’s beautiful world and the loved ones of our hearts—and go down into the

long, dreamy night of death—O this, this is sadness !

It is a solemn thing to die ; to feel that the wheels of life are pausing ; to have to struggle for breath ; gaze with open, glassy eyes into darkness ; to have the windows of the soul thrown wide open, and yet for there to come no light ; to hear the broken sob and wailing cry of some heart that is breaking because we are going ; to grapple with a cold, icy shadow ; to hear the waving of dreadful wings, with no power to escape them ; to feel a leaden weight upon the heart, curdling its blood and stilling its pulses until all is cold and still and rigid ; and then, clad in our grave-clothes and confined, to be borne to the city of silence and laid low, with no companion or friend—nothing but stillness and the worm ; to be left there alone, even by our children, who in a little while will not so much as come from the festival of life and drop a tear or plant a flower over our dust.

O friends, it is an awful thing to die ; to pass from life, from probation, from privileges, into the Eternal Presence, where in a moment our destiny will be eternally and changelessly fixed, with God or with the damned. At such a moment, what ages of suspense the soul lives ; and O how it longs then for some word of promise, some voice stealing down from the far-away heaven, assuring it of a better life—telling it, “ Fear not, but come ; for this is thy home, and here are thy friends.”

I tell you to-night that in an hour like this we must have religion or we are ruined. And I tell

you, too, that religion will stay with us in an hour like this. Friends may attend us to the margin of the valley of shadows; they may call to us and send us words of cheer as we go forth into its gloom; but it is only religion that can go with us through "the valley of the shadow of death," and make us fearless of evil. This is the religion which, in the name of my living, dying Lord, I offer you to-night. I beseech you to accept it, and to accept it *now*.

The Bible as a Book of History.

“Search the Scriptures.” John v. 39.

THERE is a class of young people in every congregation, who, while they attend Church regularly, hold themselves aloof not only from membership in the Church, but from those enterprises for good which all moral and well-disposed persons should feel an interest in promoting. Passing by others, we mention Sabbath-schools as one of the enterprises thus neglected. The value of this institution of the Church, and its influence for good in a community, none will question; and yet we often see the most regular attendants on preaching, and the most respectful listeners to the ministrations of the pulpit, taking no part whatever in this delightful field of Christian operation. Many of these urge in justification of their course the fact that they are not members of the Church, as if failure to do their duty in one thing lessens their obligation to do it in other things, or as if not being in the Church exempts them from labors connected with the morals and improvement of our common humanity.

Now, we take it for granted that all the young people of this Church—that is, all who have assumed

the vows of the Church, and who are earnestly striving to keep them—have some sort of connection with our Sabbath-school. We will not reflect either on your Christian integrity or the honesty with which you have taken on yourselves the Christian profession, by supposing it possible that any young man, or woman, holding membership in this Church is not engaged in this work, either as a teacher in its board of instruction or as a pupil in some of its classes. If, in this, I have presumed your devotion to the Church to be greater than it actually is, I am sorry that it is so. And let me say to you, kindly and plainly, that in neglecting this field you are failing to do your duty—you are neglecting a duty which is plain, positive, and essential to your growth in piety; and it is utterly inexcusable in you in this day of Christian activity to be found standing aloof from this institution of the Church. It is a position which none of our young people can occupy from choice and preserve their Christian profession and character intact. It is a position which, if you continue to maintain it, will sooner or later result in a complete indifference to any interest connected with the kingdom of Christ. The springs that feed your Christian life will dry up under this neglect; and that life, instead of developing into a sturdy Christian manhood, will die out, leaving you, like thousands now in the Church, with nothing but a cold, dead Christian profession on which to subsist. Be advised, then, by one whose only business as your pastor is to find out what is best for you to do, and to urge you to do it. Be advised by

him, and if you have not met the measure of your obligation in this respect heretofore, begin from this hour a reformation. Identify yourselves earnestly, heartily, punctually, and perseveringly with the Sabbath-school. Report yourselves ready for duty next Sabbath—ready for duty at any post the superintendent may assign you.

If there are no classes ready for you, go out in the city and enlist a class, for there are hundreds of children roaming our streets who ought to be in the Sabbath-school. Or, if you think yourself unfit to instruct others, report yourself to some one of the Bible classes as a pupil, and from this hour begin to be an earnest, diligent searcher of that Word which made young Timothy “wise unto salvation.” I do not hesitate to say that such is the duty of every young person in the Church, and I believe that every one who is under the influence of sound religious principle will try to meet this duty.

There is another class of young people, who contribute to make up our congregations, for whom we feel a deep solicitude, and to whom especially we would appeal on this subject. These are not members of the Church, but have a reverence for the Church. They as uniformly take their places in the house of God as those do who are recognized as the disciples of Christ. Their behavior there is always decorous and respectful. They go through the services of the sanctuary in a manner which indicates a high regard for religion, and which gives hope that they are not far from the kingdom. They

constitute a class whom we would rejoice to see enrolled as students of the Word of God—as regular members in the Bible classes of our Sunday-schools; and it is with an earnest desire that you may be persuaded to consecrate your Sabbath mornings to a study of the sacred Scriptures that we shall address you at this hour.

You have been appealed to often to search the Scriptures, on the ground of their moral influence, and from the consideration that your eternal happiness is bound up in the observance of the truths they proclaim. We admit that this is the highest point from which you can be appealed to on this subject, and that as moral and immortal beings it becomes you to listen; yet we know also that it is a ground of appeal with which the unrenewed heart is not in sympathy, and that because of this it often fails to produce the result for which it is employed.

Therefore, we propose to meet you in this interview on different ground—to appeal to you on another basis—in the hope that if you will not be induced by the higher consideration to search the Scriptures, you may be persuaded to do so from considerations with which, unless you disclaim all intelligence, you are in sympathy.

We propose now to forget for the time the inspiration of the Scriptures, to lose sight for the moment of their moral influence, their power to mold the soul after the similitude of the divine; we propose to do this because the unregenerate heart is not in sympathy with an argument which

recognizes the saving power of the Word of God, and because it is quite possible that you have been plied with this sort of enginery until the argument is exhausted. Therefore, my purpose in this discussion is to leave this beaten track, and meeting you on the common ground of intellectual sympathy and ambition, urge the claims of the Bible, because of its intimate relations to intellectual culture and the acquisition of knowledge.

I take it for granted that you all desire an increase of knowledge—that you have in some sort a proper appreciation of the value of mental cultivation; and now if I can only convince you that the study of the Holy Scriptures, more than the study of any other book, will contribute to this culture and increase, I shall have placed before you a motive for searching the Scriptures, which the sinner must feel equally with the Christian, and which, I trust, will make you anxious to form yourselves into Bible classes, and to meet statedly for the study of the sacred volume.

There is a tendency in this age, and particularly among the young, to undervalue the Bible in its relations to the human intellect and to lose sight of its importance in this respect in their professed reverence for it as a book designed especially for moral influences and results. We admit that it is eminently the Word of salvation, and that in this is to be seen its greatest value. The Bible itself makes this solemn declaration; the evangelical pulpits of Christendom repeat it, and the moral history of the race confirms it; yet it will not do

to sink the intellectual worth of the Bible in an admiration, either professed or real, of its moral power. It is the duty of the Church to preserve and perpetuate this distinction. In our efforts to give vigor to the mind, and to furnish food for its hungry faculties, we must guard against the depreciation of a book whose claims in this particular are of grave importance. In our esteem for it as an educator of the soul, we must not forget that it has equal power as an educator of the mind; and that while it is to the former a sun, warming into life the moral faculties, it is to the latter no less a sun, pouring from its divine orbit an illumination richer and broader than ever fell from the circle of science or history or literature.

We live in an age which it is the custom to magnify on account of the achievements which human intelligence has wrought. It has done much, and promises to do more, and we rejoice at it all. I most heartily send up my individual thanksgiving at the progress which science and art and commerce have made—at the forward movements of man since the beginning of history: to be able to create and use language; to make record of the past; to enact laws; to build institutions; to climb the heavens, to search out their times and orbits, to penetrate their secret affinities; to count the atoms of matter; to bridge the sea by his inventions; to command the lightning itself to think his thoughts and run upon his errands throughout the world—to do these and the ten thousand other wonderful things which man has done is in proof that although fallen and sinful

he is nevertheless a stupendous being, and that his intelligence is pushing the world onward as the ages advance; still, we confess to an apprehension that in this age the advance-guard in progress are overlooking somewhat the great agency by which all forward movements are to be made permanent, and that because of this oversight much of what seems to be progress will prove to be ephemeral, and end in open, undisguised infidelity.

If those who at heart are sincerely wedded to the interests of humanity, and who are seeking to elevate the masses, lose sight of the fundamental truth that the Word of God is to be looked to as the primal agency in all—if, we say, this truth should be forgotten, as we fear it is by many of our statesmen and men of letters—the result will be that theories in philosophy will be adopted, and schools in literature become ascendant, fatal alike to the truth as it is in Jesus and to the advance and perpetuity of individual and national virtue.

What we have said has more or less connection with the moral view of this question, we know, and might under other circumstances be enlarged on with profit; yet, if we turn to the intellectual side, which is the one we have proposed to speak of, we shall find a most lamentable degeneracy. What, now, are the facts which this view of the question presents? Evidently, that the Bible, as a book related to the culture of the mind and the acquisition of knowledge, if not entirely overlooked, has been assigned a subordinate place—evidently, that the Bible, with its historians and philosophers and poets,

is well-nigh forgotten by our students and *literati* in their devotion to Plato and Cousin, to Goethe and Byron, to Dickens and Thackeray, and the legion of dimmer lights in philosophy and literature. In our popular institutes and colleges the young are taught to turn to the Mount of Parnassus, the vale of Tempe, the waters of Helicon, and to the garden of the Hesperides, for the fair and beautiful, as though the Bible were but a musty tome, fit to be looked into only by the hooded friar or the cowléd monk. Therefore, it becomes us to inquire gravely into the matter, to approach this subject reverently, and to inquire thoughtfully into the value of this abused and slighted volume as an instrument for intellectual culture and expansion; and this we propose to do, in this and two additional discourses.

We take this high position in the outset, namely, that for the acquisition of knowledge and for giving vigor and strength to the intellect, the Bible, considered merely as a book, is of more worth to the student than all other books combined; and that therefore it is of the first importance to those who are aiming at intellectual excellence, and who are seeking knowledge, to search the Scriptures diligently. It is proper to observe that we use the term knowledge here in the sense of learning, which is, correctly speaking, the result or product of the faculty of knowing.

Lord Bacon—whom but few men have equaled in learning—in his classification of knowledge, in the sense we are considering it, divides it into history,

philosophy, and poetry; the first referring to the memory, the second to reason, and the third to the imagination. These—history, philosophy, and poetry—constitute, according to his arrangement, the entire circle of human knowledge, or learning. To have studied these three departments is to have acquired knowledge, and to have comprehended what these embrace is to have compassed the realm of human knowledge. Now, then, the volume that will give the most reliable and the clearest instruction, that will pour upon the mind the fullest illumination, and give to the student the most satisfactory information on these three grand divisions of knowledge, is the volume of all others most important for him to study, and deserves the first place in his regards. We hold that the Bible, above all other books, does this. And now, following the Baconian classification of knowledge, we shall devote the remainder of this discourse to an inquiry into the value of the Bible as a work of history. If you take into consideration the age in which it had its origin, including the scanty materials with which its earlier books had to build a history, and the circumstances under which the records were made, its equal in historic value cannot be found in the entire catalogue of histories. Although not written with the design of its being regarded in any specific sense as a history, it has become, in fact, the great head-spring of all history. No matter how the waters of antiquity were seen to diverge in after centuries, their streams may all be traced to one common source, the Bible. It is our only guide back to that period when “the

earth was without form and void ;'' when upon the dim night of chaos no brightening morn had dawned—that long, drear, original night, in whose dark, wide bosom worlds and time and life itself, vegetable, animal, rational, all slept. As we stand there amid that vast, silent, formless brooding, with no sun nor star nor sparkling nebulae visible above, no earth with water and fire and atmosphere around us, with no knowledge of being, either of God or angel or man or animal, not so much as thought or emotion or instinct known—as we stand there, in imagination, walled in and overhung with the wondrous, weird, and awful silence of that black night—this is the only history that speaks to us of the creation that followed. It tells us of the breaking light, of the coming of power and life there in that wide abyss where chaos and death held reign ; of the spreading out of a grand pavilion of firmament and sky ; of the kindling of magnificent lights, the roll of seas, the thunder of oceans, the song of birds, the hum of insects, the murmur of infant streams ; of the mystery and movements of life as seen in the marching planet, the waving forest, the roving herds, the myriad creatures in air and sea, and above all in the miniature God—the living humanity placed as sovereign of a created world, and as head of the unborn ages.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light ;

and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." And so in language thus simple and beautiful does this history detail the wonders of creation, down to the first Sabbath passed by Adam and Eve in their Eden-home. Who has not drawn pictures in his mind of that glorious Sabbath sun as it broke upon paradise, and which after lighting up the home of the first married pair passed silently away, leaving them to gaze enraptured on the starry robe of night above and around them? Ah, how beautiful that first holy, peaceful Sabbath, of which this history speaks! Shall I tell you how it stands sculptured in my imagination as a thing of beauty and a joy forever? The six days' work was done—"the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them"—and the day of rest, the first Sabbath of the world, is at hand. First came the dawn, breathing the odor of the fresh and dewy flowers, and then the streaming splendor of the sun; and as the bridal pair lift their eyes, the earth and sky glitter and glow under their rejoicing vision. They behold flashing lines of light kindling into golden beauty on water and tree and plant and flower. A great joy swells their hearts as they witness with the advancing morn the happy life of all God's creatures around them. They see the sportive play of insects, the expanding and closing of the butterfly's wing. They hear the grasshopper

trilling his matin hymn from perfumed tufts, and the bee with its low, musical hum as he comes forth all warm with the sun and afloat on the breeze from blossoms gemmed with the dew of morning. They hear the song of birds as it swells from leafy bowers or rises from shaded nooks or scented heath or mountain tarn, until the day deepening high and bright over all, they behold the sun shining grandly in the sky, showering his splendor on vale and wood and water, and lighting up the broad, sweeping heavens from horizon to horizon. And now the noon passes, and the day declines. The sky is blushing at the coming night, and soon the sun has vanished through the flaming portal of the west. The falling dew bends the young flowers into peaceful dreams, and stars light up their tremulous fires in the evening sky. In the weird beauty of that holy twilight stand the first pair, gazing enchanted upon the scene. Arcturus and Orion and all their shining sisterhood are before them. Planets with their moons and rings and belts, the mystic nebulae with its uncounted systems and far-apart suns and wide circles of radiant spheres, all float out like veiled envoys of beauty; and beneath the glittering arch, and with their souls filled with God and peace and holy love, they pass silently into the land of sweet, beautiful dreams.

Where now, if not in the Bible, can we find any satisfactory account of the beginning of this great system of materialities by which we are surrounded and of which we are a part? or of the origin of our race? These are questions which all accredited

history has settled according to the information gathered from this book. And so too of other questions growing out of these, and which became intelligible only under the light, emanating from this volume. Without this light, what would we know of the origin of mankind—their dispersion over the earth, the first peopling of the several divisions of the globe, the beginning and progress of language, together with the birth and history of nations? The Bible is the only book that gives us a correct knowledge of the primitive forms of society, the systems of government first adopted, the modes of social intercourse, the beginnings of commerce, of the arts and sciences, and of their distinctive bearings on the progress and fortunes of our race. It comprises also those great truths by which political changes have been wrought in different ages, and by simply stating these, and indicating their connection with individuals and periods, it places in our hands a chart by which all subsequent history may be explained. Although its annals began in the very dawn of time and in the infancy of our race, it comprehends every question of importance to that race; and by presenting these as they were identified with men and as they were evolved and illustrated by after ages, it has made its history to be what one has said of all history—"philosophy teaching by example."

But the Bible does even more. It is not only a record of events that have occurred, but a prophecy of what is to come; so that much of it may be said

to be the "anticipation of history." This of itself places it high above all other history as a source of knowledge. All that the most brilliant historians of antiquity or of modern times can do is to lead the student along the dead past, to call up ghostly heroes and moldering principles and effete theories of forgotten ages, and by their reproduction make him feel as though he were among them and of them. The Bible does this with a power equaled by no other history; and in addition, and by means of prophecy it bears him on through centuries to come; so that of this venerable volume it may be said that it is not merely the history of the past six thousand years, but of all time and of all things. It becomes the history of man and the history of the universe—the history of time and the history of eternity; for these are the broad and interminable fields over which the wing of prophecy sweeps, and from which she gathers utterances for the ear of the world. Beginning with the creation of the material universe, it records the revolutions of its suns and systems, until the ponderous orbs of which it is composed vanish beyond mortal vision, and there breaks upon the eye of faith the new heavens and the new earth spoken of by prophecy, and which are to roll on forever, enameled with beauty and hung with glory.

Where now, in all the annals of the past, or among the collections of historic lore, will you find a volume comparable with the Bible as a compendium of history? It contains the history of God and angels and men, of heaven and earth and hell,

of the past, present, and future, and is therefore the most wonderful, even as it is the most perfect, history in the world.

To become thoroughly acquainted with this book, then, is to have the key to all history; and hence we conclude that there is no book so well calculated to add to our knowledge in this particular department as the sacred Scriptures. Therefore, the Bible is preëminently a book for the mind as well as the heart, for the intellect as well as the affections. In fact, as one has said of this volume: "There is no point of view under which it can be surveyed that does not commend it to the thoughtful mind as a wonderful book. Traveling down to us across the waste of far-off centuries, it brings the history of times" which without this volume would have been left to conjecture and fable. "Instructing us as to the creation of the magnificent universe, and defining the authorship of that rich furniture, as well material as intellectual, with which this universe is stored," it delivers our minds, as no other book does, from those vague and unsatisfying theories which reason, unaided in her searchings, proposed in respect to the origin of all things. The sublimity too of the topics of which it treats, the dignified yet simple manner with which it handles them, the mighty mysteries which it develops, the clear illumination it throws on points of profound interest to beings conscious of immortality—these and other considerations prove that no student can rise from the perusal of this volume, as a book of history, without having his mind expanded a hundred-fold

more than is possible from any or all of the histories of the world. As such, and in prayer to God that he would incline your minds to its diligent study, we commend it to the young, as the first and greatest history of ancient or modern times.

The Bible as a Book of Philosophy.

“Thy words giveth understanding to the simple.” Psalm cxix. 130.

THE object of the discourse this morning was to set forth the value of the Bible as a book of history—history being the first department, according to Lord Bacon’s classification, in the circle of learning. The second division in that classification is philosophy; and our purpose now is to show that the Bible, more than any other book, furnishes satisfactory information on those subjects which lie legitimately within the range of philosophic investigation.

Now, what are those subjects? There is, first, a divine philosophy, which treats of God; secondly, a natural philosophy, which treats of material nature; and thirdly, a mental philosophy, which treats of man as a moral and intellectual being.

It is legitimately the business of philosophy, then, to learn of God, the universe, and man. These, in fact, are the three great mysteries over which the ages have toiled, and where reason has been baffled; and our position is that the Bible furnishes the clearest, and indeed the only reliable, information on these mysterious subjects that has ever been

given, and that therefore it is the best book on philosophy in the world.

We do not say that such men as Bacon and Locke and others have given the world nothing reliable in philosophy, but we do say that where men have sought to know God and the universe and man in contempt of the Bible, as in France, or in ignorance of revelation, as in the older systems of philosophy, they have been unable to arrive at any thing satisfactory.

Now then, that this question may come before you fairly, we propose to institute a brief comparison between the philosophy of Moses and that of celebrated schoolmen whose system originated either in independence or in ignorance of the Bible. And that we may deal fairly with the other side, we shall select for this comparison from the systems of antiquity that of Plato—a man whose equal in many things has never been found among uninspired men. In the system of Plato there are two principles by the combination and exertion of which all existences, material and immaterial, were produced. The first of these was held to be visible to the senses, and full of energy; the second was regarded as invisible and passive. The one was called mind, or soul, or spirit; the other was called substance, or matter. The designs of the first were supposed to receive opposition from the second; and storms, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and all disturbing phenomena seen in the physical world, were appealed to in proof of this opposition. The universe was supposed to be endowed with life, and

impelled in its revolutions by an inferior, restless soul, which had become evil by its association with material things. The spiritual part of man, it was held, was originally pure, but had become corrupt by its connection with matter.

The souls of men and the stars of heaven were believed to be equal in number, God having in this way provided for each soul a distinct and separate orb as its final home. Rebellious spirits, it was contended, were doomed to occupy a place in material bodies where they were to expiate their crimes, and from which, when the expiation was completed, they were to be delivered by death. This system made virtue to consist in the soul's constant opposition to the material. The soul was to keep in continual remembrance the exalted condition from which it had fallen—to separate itself as far as possible from objects of sense, to restrain the passions and devote itself to celestial contemplation.

Plato held to the probable immortality of the soul, and that since it was in a material body, as a punishment for its rebellion whenever the creating intelligence should obtain sufficient power over matter, which was its equipollent antagonism, he would dissolve the relation between it and the soul and transmit the latter to its star-home above.

We have thus briefly, and as we think fairly, outlined the system of a man who, for imagination, for philosophic conception, for profound insight—in short, for great genius and power—has never had an

uninspired equal. We regard his system as approaching nearer to truth than any other, and as having reached the highest point in philosophy accessible to unassisted reason. In a celebrated painting by Raphael, called the "School of Athens," Plato is represented as standing with serene countenance, dignified mien, and hand lifted to heaven as if in the act of revealing the mysteries of nature to a listening world. It was a noble conception, worthy of the artist and the subject.

And yet, when this system is compared with that of Moses, the grand teachings of the Greek philosopher sink into insignificance before the grander yet simpler revelations of the Midian shepherd. To say nothing now of the fact that Plato was indebted to Moses (whose system was older, and was widely circulated at the time that Plato wrote) for many of his principles—to say nothing of this unquestionable fact—a slight examination will satisfy us that the Platonian philosophy abounds with contradictions and absurdities. The fundamental principle in it ascribes all existence to two antagonistic and eternal principles, and this supposes that there are two distinct, independent, and eternal natures, which is not only an absurdity, but an absolute impossibility. These two distinct, independent, and eternal natures, it is contended, were so combined in different proportions, and according to certain models which existed eternally in the conceptions of the Divine mind, as to have produced the infinite variety of forms seen around us. In all this you cannot fail to see how contradictions increase and impossibili-

ties multiply at every step, so that the student who seeks to arrive at any thing satisfactory on questions of philosophic research will, if he take Plato for his guide, become first perplexed, then maddened, and at last despairing.

Now, the Mosaic philosophy makes all created existence the result of one cause. It reveals that cause as a Being of infinite perfections; as an absolute Sovereign, against whom no antagonisms can prevail, and who is beyond the control of what has been called philosophic necessity, as the unoriginated God and Father of all, who is above all things and has control of all. In this you see no absurdity, no contradiction—nothing but causation and consequence, and the whole accordant with reason. You see no dual supremacy, no equipollent and opposing forces, no war of spirit and matter, as in the Platonian philosophy; but simple, unchallenged sovereignty and unbroken harmony. This is the God of our philosophy. The object of our love and worship and trust is no philosophic abstraction, no vague, intangible principle, fighting his way through coëternal antagonisms; no pantheistic divinity, brooding solemnly amid old woods, and beside moaning seas, and beneath shining stars, content with inspiring material forms, from the mountain daisy to the marching planet, with life and essence and spirit. No! our God is a person, a reality, a being—vaster than space, more awful than nature, more majestic than the universe; as infinite as he is benevolent, and as glorious as he is infinite.

We turn next to the second great mystery, which is the universe, and proceed to inquire what light the Bible sheds at this point.

For ages beyond the first records of profane history the universe existed. When these records began, the far-off heavens were lighted up as now, and our globe, with its earth and water and fire and air, was to all appearances as it now is. Its mountains were standing, its seas were ebbing and flowing, its rivers were running, its seasons were coming and going, its zones were frigid and temperate and torrid, its elements were calm and stormy, as now. To all appearances the universe has known no infancy, no childhood, but stood forth in the beginning in all the perfection and strength of a thing completed at once. It is a great mystery. The mind is awed as it confronts the universe of matter, with its combinations, its suns and spheres and complicated systems, separated so widely as that light itself expires in the intervening abysses. We wonder when it began, how it was built, what the properties of which it is composed; and to answer these inquiries has been the effort of philosophy in all ages.

Now, we do not claim for the Bible that it instructs us in the affinities and properties of matter; that it gives us, for instance, the measurements and calculations of astronomy, or the minute analyses which belong to chemistry. This is the work of science rather than philosophy. It is with the origin rather than the dimensions of the universe that philosophy is concerned; and we may safely affirm

that the best solution that has ever been given is found in the opening sentence of the Mosaic record: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This sentence has more sound philosophy in it than can be found in all the libraries in the world. Men may talk of solution, but the only solution to be found is in that simple declaration. Its philosophy is clear and comprehensible. The ignorant cottager understands it, and can foil the skeptic with it. The poor Indian, standing in his forest-temple, in sound of the thunder-peal, which to him is the voice of the Creator, can see the fitness and the connection between cause and effect here. It breaks the mystery, and the universe stands before us not as a thing of chance, not as an organic growth, but as created, and with God as its maker and upholder.

The third topic in which philosophy is interested is man, the greatest, and in some respects the most incomprehensible, of all mysteries.

The origin, nature, and destiny of man have been questions of speculation in all past time. When he contemplates himself as he is—a being of wonderful faculties, forever seeking, yet never satisfied, and destined at last to die and become dust—it is but natural that he should ask: "From whence came I? what am I? and whither am I going?" These questions have come from every thoughtful soul; and they have been variously answered. These answers are found in the fables of antiquity and in the speculations of modern infidelity; and yet they have failed to give satisfaction. The only response that

can relieve the soul of its disquiet comes from the Word of God. According to the philosophy of that book, man came from God—is the offspring of the Divine mind, and is a compound of matter and spirit. It teaches that God formed his body out of clay, that into this curiously wrought piece of mechanism he breathed the breath of life, and that man became a living soul. Coming from God, he is like God in nature, is a spiritual being, is endowed with intellect and heart, and was made to know and love God. This philosophy places him at the head of creation and stamps him with a value greater than the universe.

Against this view, infidelity has pointed to the heavens and asked, What is man, compared with all that magnificence and splendor? We tell the infidel, in reply: Your universe, with all its pomp and complication, is without reason—it has no intelligence, there is no throb of consciousness in all its mighty heart; and because of this destitution, it is infinitely less than man in dignity and worth. What is all its glory in the absence of intelligence, consciousness, and love? The sun is ignorant of its own splendor, the thunder cannot hear its own voice, the lightning knows nothing of its own brightness, the air is not susceptible to its own refreshing qualities; while the grand old earth has beauty for the eye and music for the ear, and power to elevate and fill the spirit of man, and while these all contribute to lead his thoughts up to God and to bind his affections to the Father of all, they are themselves without intelligence,

without feeling, without love; and this intelligence and feeling and love man has, and is therefore grander in nature and greater in value than them all.

Irreverent science may unveil the universe; infidelity may parade her planets with their spacious sweeps; she may make every star a sun, and every sun the center of a system of secondary luminaries, all multiplying, until the science of numbers fails to enumerate the millions of starry pulses throbbing in the sky; yet man is greater than them all, for it is he that measures their orbits, that tracks them in their flight, that makes them subservient to devotion and hope and confidence by proving them to be manifestations of the wisdom and power and love of the Godhead. Who does not rejoice at this knowledge, this revelation of his spirituality, found in the philosophy of the Bible? It furnishes incentives to higher and holier living; for a nature thus grand in its ruins may rise to the divine. It presents motives to us to labor for the meanest and most abandoned of our race; for it shows that even in the most degraded soul there are germs of good, which if cared for and nurtured will grow and blossom and bear fruit.

Planted on this philosophy, you can go to the drunkard, the felon, the miserable outcast from society, the poor abandoned wretch whose life is a ruin and a wreck—you can go to him, toppling as he is on the very verge of hell, and by telling him of his origin, his noble lineage, his inherited immortality, persuade him to break the chains of his

accursed bondage and stand forth a free man, a comfort to the dear ones at home, and a monument of the redeeming grace of God.

We turn now from man's nature to his destiny, which is another mystery with which philosophy has wrestled. On this subject the ancients were divided into three classes. The first, or Aristotelian class, held to the doctrine of annihilation. Their motto was, "Where death is, we are not." "Death," said their leader, "is the most terrible of all things: it is the end of our existence; and after it man has neither to expect good nor to fear evil." The second class held the theory of emanation and reabsorption, believing the spiritual in man to be a part of God, and that at death it would revert back to him. The third class went still farther. They had hope of a life and home after death, where the good were to be happy; yet their opinions were crude and unsatisfactory, and were held, as Cicero declared, "only while contemplating the proofs by which they were maintained." The first were avowed infidels, the second denied the individuality of the soul, while the third, or Platonian class, held but a fluctuating hope of immortality.

The result of all these inquiries proves that mere reason cannot grapple with this question of human destiny. We would not undervalue reason. We admit that she has won marvelous triumphs; yet we contend that her highest summit was climbed when, without illumination from the Bible, she an-

nounced that immortality was possible; but this announcement had nothing in it that was satisfying. It was only as a gleam of light from some far-away realm—as faint whisperings from some unknown state to come, giving hope of a brighter world and a better companionship, yet giving no certainty. Nevertheless the discovery of this bare possibility of a future life, which unassisted reason made, was itself an evidence of the grandeur of the soul; and I feel awed as I contemplate the process by which this mighty achievement was won. I see her first settling the question of her immateriality. If distinct from matter, she naturally concludes that she is superior to it, how wonderful soever may be its combinations. Impressed thus with her greatness and dignity and grandeur, she then adventures upon the amazing sweep of reasoning by analogy and comparison. She fixes her eye upon the illuminated heavens and begins the work of enumeration and contrast. She computes the number of worlds; she takes in the span and altitude of each; she gazes bewildered on their number and magnitude. When at the point of despair, she gathers new life and hope at the remembrance that God has endowed her with intelligence, and that she is therefore greater in nature than all that sparkling magnificence above. She concludes that if greater in nature she must be grander in destiny—may live when every star and every fire shall have gone out; upborne by this consciousness and hope, she pours forth her shout of immortality; and yet that shout is but the shout of hope. She has only reached the

border-line of eternity. There she stands now—a thing of glory—gazing back on the path of her travel and thrilled with the hope of immortality. There she stands with poised and weary wing, breathless and expectant, yet uncertain. There she is, on the summit of that infinite height; and as I see her hovering near the gate-way, her eye flashing with hungering desire to enter—longing and hoping for some hand to throw wide the portal that she may pass in—I feel how sublime a thing the soul must be; but alas! as she hovers there, so full of hope, there passes by a funeral throng, bearing a dead body to the grave; and as she gazes upon that pageantry of death, and hears the living call, yet receives no answer from the cold, dumb lips of the silent sleeper, her beautiful fabric crumbles, her eagle eye is struck blind, and she comes back weeping, doubting, and despairing.

Human reason, my friends, can go no farther than this. The grave is her victor. The sepulcher is dumb, and will not answer her anxious askings. Her lights all go out at the mouth of the tomb, and here, where most of all we want assurance, the philosophy of this world is silent. Other questions are purely speculative, but this question of life after death is practical. It concerns us personally, immediately, and eternally. We go with our friends to the borders of the tomb. While the pulse beats and the heart is warm, they speak to us; but soon the lips grow pale, the voice falters, the eye swims in death, and we call, but they answer not again. Yesterday they were with

us; to-day they are buried. O is the past nothing but a dream! Has the future no hope? Are those eyes which once beamed on us with such fond affection closed in eternal darkness? Are those lips which in life were so eloquent of love silent forever? Is there no life to come, when our dead are to be given back to us? Tell me! tell me! for they were bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. They were my household idols, dearer to me than life; and my full heart would know the worst! O tell me, for I too am voyaging with torn sail and tattered canvas toward that dark, dismal ocean! I see the signs of my broken cordage, and hear the sound of my rent canvas flapping in the midnight winds, and feel that I am nearing that stormy sea; and if there be no pilot to guide me through, I am lost.

O I thank God that here, where human philosophy is silent on the question of human destiny, the Bible speaks with no uncertain utterance, and that the revelation it gives has power to make music around the death-beds of the dying, and to kindle hope among the graves of the departed! It tells me that the soul is immortal; that though the rooted hills may fall, the mountains become dust, and the ocean vapor, no decay shall ever touch the universe of souls; that though the very stars of heaven shall fade and fall, and the whole system of nature shall at length expire, the humblest, poorest, lowliest among us have been born into an undying life; that we stand on the great platform of immortal natures, with a dying universe below us and an eternal God above us, and that amid all the mournful

scenery of death by which we are surrounded, we alone are deathless; that our dead have only passed into a nobler life, where they await us in all the bloom and freshness of immortality; that there with God and them we may share an existence to which the age of the earth, of the starry heavens, and of the whole vast universe will be less than a morning dream—a glorious life, in which, after millions on millions of centuries have passed, we shall bound into the endless race with all the freshness of immortal infancy, and with an eagerness that will welcome enjoyments ever new.

This philosophy teaches us that as we were born for eternity, eternity shall surely be ours; that this longing for everlasting mansions, which the disquieted soul feels, is but the prophecy of the eternal life to come, and that that life will be one of deathless love. This is the philosophy of the Bible, in the question of man's destiny, and it abounds with comfort as well as instruction. What neither the idealisms of Plato nor the speculations of modern schools could determine is settled beyond question in this volume. What the light of nature but dimly shadowed is here disclosed with certainty; and while we bury our dead out of our sight, we feel that they still live, and that we shall meet them again. We need not, with Ion of Argus, ask that question of the hills that look eternal; nor of the flowing streams that lucid flow forever; nor of the stars, amid whose fields of azure we have often trod in glory; but of the Bible, on whose declarations we rest our hopes,

and which tells us that the believing dead “sleep in Jesus.” It is a beautiful expression—sleeping in Jesus. They have passed through their day of toil. The night of rest has come. With closed eyes and folded hands, they are lying on the bed where Jesus slept.

They softly lie and sweetly sleep
Low in the ground.

They are gathering vigor for the coming morn. O weep not for those who sleep in Jesus! The pain of life with them has passed, its anguish is over, its cares have ended, its sorrows have ceased; and now they “sleep in Jesus.” They are not dead, but only sleep—sleep in Jesus. The soul still lives, and when the morning comes—for, thank God, it will come!—its beautiful light will kindle upon the burial-places of the world—when the morning comes, the sleeping bodies of God’s saints are to come forth from their places of slumber to be clothed with immortality and admitted into the presence of the Lord.

This, we say, is our philosophy, and we are satisfied with it—satisfied to live and die upon its declarations. Will you not study the volume that teaches it? Will you not seek to enlarge your minds by taking in the great truths it enunciates? Will you not heed its voice, when it lifts the veil of mystery from God, from the universe, and from man? Will you not love it, when it comes to you in your sorrow and when death has made you desolate, and offers you comfort? when it plants the angel of hope by your side, which, with hand pointing to heaven,

whither the loved have gone, tells you of a golden isle where parted barks may all be moored at last, fast-anchored by the eternal throne?

May the entrance of this Word give you light and comfort and eternal salvation !

The Bible as a Book of Poetry.

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.” Exodus xv. 1.

WE have read you this opening strain in the song of Moses and the children of Israel, delivered on the occasion of their triumphant passage through the Red Sea, as highly suggestive, in view of the subject to be discussed, which is the value of the Bible, considered as a book of poetry; and as this discourse will close the series on the Bible, we beg leave in the outset to present a summary of what has gone before.

The position assumed, and which we have been defending, is that the Bible, considered simply as a book, and apart from its claims to inspiration, is the most valuable book in the world as a help to the acquisition of knowledge. The object we had in this was to lead the unconverted to place a higher estimate on the Scriptures, and to induce them, by considerations addressed to the mind, and based wholly upon intellectual sympathy, to connect themselves with the Bible classes in our Sabbath-schools and to enter upon the study of the Bible.

In attempting to maintain this position, we made Lord Bacon's classification of knowledge into history, philosophy, and poetry our stand-point, and proceeded in the first discourse to consider the claims of the Bible as a work of history, and to compare it as such with other productions. In the second discourse we considered its claims as a work of philosophy, and the clearness with which it shed its illumination on the subjects of God, the universe, and man. In order to present the subject fairly, we instituted a comparison between the philosophy of Plato and that of the Bible, and endeavored to show the superiority of the latter over the former. The system of Plato was selected because we regard it as the best uninspired exposition of philosophy that has ever been given. Whether we take those systems that preceded Plato, or the Grecian schools which came after him, or the more recent theories of Descartes, Spinoza, and others, we find nothing comparable to Plato; and Plato, we hold, is not to be compared with Moses as a philosopher. Even the school founded by Bacon and Reid and Locke is indebted to the Bible for whatever of truth it possesses; all of which goes to make good our position that the Bible is the most valuable of all books as an instrumentality for the acquisition of knowledge.

We come now to consider the remaining branch in our classification of knowledge, or learning, which is poetry, and to inquire into the claims of the Bible in this respect.

Poetry has been very properly adjudged the first

place in age and excellence among the fine arts. It was the first fixed form of language—the earliest perpetuation of thought. It existed before prose in history, before music in melody, before painting in description, and before sculpture in imagery. History, we have said, concerns the memory, and philosophy the reason, while it belongs to poetry to speak to the imagination. Its essential connection is with the beautiful, the true, and the good; with the beautiful, because whatever is lovely calls it into being; with the true, because its foundations rest upon the truth of things; and with the good, because whatever is purest has most power to attract it.

Among pagan nations the faculty of the poet was held to be an emanation from the gods. In this they were not far from the truth. The true poet is the called of God and the anointed of Heaven. How this is I may not be able to show, but I am satisfied that there never was a great poet who learned his art or could teach it. It came to him as a gift from Heaven, and as such he could not impart it to others. We speak now of the poet, not the rhymster—of poetry, not doggerel; for if any one department of knowledge has been abused by village vanity and country conceit, it is this of poetry—as all schooldom, newspaperdom, and especially all wisdom, can bear witness. It is a pity that these sighing swains and languishing Clorindas do not read and apply the Ayrshire plowman's expressive couplet:

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!

For it might "frae monie a blunder free" them.

We repeat that in its truest, highest, and noblest sense, the poetic faculty may be regarded as an inspiration from Heaven. Poetic genius may be, and often is, improved in creative measure, and in development and display, by learning and refinement; yet among the rudest people, and the most illiterate men, it has been found like native gold and unwrought diamond—as pure and perfect in essence, though incrustated with baser matter, as among the most enlightened nations and in the best educated circles. It is seen less frequently among the first, because it is less laboriously dug from the mine and less studiously purified in the furnace, or polished on the wheel. When seen at all, it is because some irrepressible outgush brings it to the surface. Once in awhile it is washed from the mountains, or seen glittering in the sand, and being recognized as pure gold by some polished mind of kindred metal, it becomes current despite the want of education and culture and refinement.

What is poetry? We answer that poetry is the intellect coming forth in its grandest but simplest forms, and wearing its most beautiful robes. It is the imagination scattering the light of truth from the kindled fire within—not by slow deductions, but from inspiration; and hence the true poet has somewhat of divineness. He is essentially creative, and is wedded to the beautiful. The spirit of beauty enthralles him, commands him, and rules him. He is forever smitten with it, and forever worships it, bowing at its shrines, and exclaiming with Shelley,

O awful loveliness!

To his imagination all beauty is typical—whether seen in the ever-varying splendor of rising and setting suns; or in the quiet beauty of night; or in the bursting buds and opening flowers of spring; or in the midnight thunder, leaping among the mountain barriers of the sky; or in the dark eye of woman; or in the smile of the infant, as it slumbers on its mother's knee; in all, he beholds types of a beauty far off, yet attainable—symbols of a beauty infinite and Godlike—and therefore he worships it.

As perfection in form and taste in dress are essential to physical beauty, so in poetry the thought itself and the language in which it is expressed should be faultless. The combination of these in song makes it resemble the Venus of Praxitiles, which was covered with a representation of gauze so delicate that the ancients complimented the artist by calling it "woven wind." Now, in poetry, this rare and felicitous combination makes what has been exquisitely called "the drapery of a poet's dream."

The true poet should always be regarded as one of God's own messengers. He comes rarely, but when he does come, he stands, like Shakespeare and Milton, apart from and high above millions of his kind; and we feel like exclaiming with reverence, "How beautiful are his feet, as he stands upon the mountain of imagination and pours glad tidings down into the valley where men toil in weariness!" He comes to the children of sorrow and labor to tell them that the day is breaking—that the light, to behold which they have been straining the vision

through the long night, is kindling upon the mountain-tops, and that soon the valley of darkness and sorrow will stand high and bright under the deepening day. Therefore, the true poet has a divine mission to his race. The command is to him, as to others, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people;" and woe to him if he prove false to that command—woe to him if, as too many have done, he pours out the gall of sarcasm and misanthropy instead of messages of tenderness and encouragement; for to do this is to weave for his brow a crown of fire instead of a wreath of fame.

As God's messenger to man, he has a great mission—a mission which, alas! but few have filled nobly. He is to bid his race come forth from their bondage and go forward, so that, as Longfellow sings,

Each to-morrow
May find them farther than to-day.

He but degrades himself and his mission if, with great powers to fulfill it, he emasculates his intellectual manhood by squandering his time and talents in songs for the festive board and for convivial mirth, or by sonnets in honor of Venus and Cupid. Such ignoble dallying may do for birds of feeble wing, but the eagles of song will stretch a nobler pinion and seek a grander sweep. Like those Hebrew bards of which the Bible speaks, who made the desert resound with odes in which the children of Israel were told of a land flowing with milk and honey—odes to which the pillar of fire seemed to listen with complacency and to flash out a deeper

crimson of silent praise—like those old Bible poets of the wilderness, the poets of this age should tell the toiling millions of this desert of time of a land of fairer promise and of better things.

We have dwelt thus long on poetry in general, and upon the work to which the poet is called, because, as a general thing, the people of this country do not adequately estimate either the one or the other.

We are not chargeable perhaps with an undervaluation of certain kinds of poetry—such as ballads and lyrics, which catch the eye from the corner of the morning paper and impart to the fashionable reader, as she yawns over the memory of the last night's dissipation, a momentary but sweet refreshment; but how few are there who take pleasure in such wonderful creations as Milton has left us! We do not mean in this to disparage lyrical poetry, for it has scattered the seeds of truth and the flowers of fancy in many a desert place of life. Lyrics have been compared to “sparks of Promethean fire floating down to light up a happy glow in the soul;” and the comparison is as true as it is beautiful. They are as spring blossoms dropping from the tree of knowledge to cheer the passing pilgrim as stray peris from the bowers of paradise, creeping playfully into the chambers of the heart; as single strains of rare music, waking long echoes; or as wild flowers blooming by the way-side to cheer and gladden the worn and weary—and therefore are not to be despised. They have done and are still doing marvels in the world, as any one must know who

will think of the influence of Goethe's and Schiller's lyrics in Germany, and of the popular ballads in all nations. The "Cotter's Saturday Night," has hallowed Scotland more than the fame of her battles. The poetry of the affections as breathed from the harp of Mrs. Hemans lingers around the hearthstones and graves of two nations, and the ballads of Moore and Burns still echo in the halls of pleasure and around firesides where "cronies meet." The missionary hymn of Heber, and the songs of Watts and Newton and the Wesleys, will live as long as religion has a shrine or God a worshiper.

It is not that we value lyrical poetry less, but epic more, that we dwell here in our address to the young. Each is good, but one is grander and more inspiring than the other; and the very fact that it requires study in order to its comprehension, earnest thought in order to its enjoyment, shows how important it is for the young who are seeking knowledge to betake themselves to a kind of poetry that will add to their intellectual vigor. The poetry that will most surely and effectually accomplish this is to be found in the Bible. The claims of the Bible in this respect have long been without question. No argument is needed to establish them, for they have been universally acknowledged. Critics of the first taste and cultivation, scholars the most learned and profound in every nation—and many of them openly professing to have no sympathy with this volume—have frankly admitted that for poetical compositions of the highest order, and evincing the loftiest genius, the Bible

stands unrivaled. And in fact there are reasons aside from the inspiration of this volume why it should rank high as a poetical composition. Look, for instance, at the early constitution of the Jewish nation, and you will see that every thing connected with that people was calculated to foster and mature the spirit of poetry. Contemplate them in their national adolescence. They were young and fresh and full of hope. A brilliant destiny had been promised them, and even on the supposition now that their religion was only superstition, it had sufficient control of the national thought to amount to a settled conviction. The promise was that through them "all the families of the earth should be blessed." They received the promise as from God. They believed it. The young grew up in this conviction, and the old rejoiced in it as their great preëminence. It gave them importance in their own estimation, and interest in the eyes of all other nations. It supplied them with those mighty hopes and grand ambitions in which the soul of poetry dwells, and on which it feeds. It fired their courage, and made them invincible in war. They believed themselves to be the chosen instruments of God to carry forward his great purposes along the ages, and that they were under his special protection. They comprehended the dignity of their position and the magnitude of their mission, and were duly impressed with the grandeur of each. In addition, they received direct and immediate revelations from God. They were admitted to personal interviews with him by the fissured rock, at the

burning bush, and at the base of the smoking mountain. They had seen him part the waves of the sea for their deliverance, and then roll them in upon their enemies. For them he had spread the protecting cloud by day, and kindled the pillar of fire to direct them at night. He had rained manna from heaven to feed them, and had made the desert rock pour out water for them to drink. They had stood around their altar of worship, and had seen fire descend from heaven at the call of their prophet and consume their sacrifice. In one of their fiercest conflicts they had beheld the surrounding hills covered with a celestial army, sent to give them victory. These unparalleled wonders made them a nation of poets, and prepared them as a people to give to the world the sublimest strains that have ever been sung and these immortal productions have been handed down to us in a volume which, while it is the most accessible of all volumes, is the most neglected by the young. We undertake to say that there is not a work of pagan antiquity or of modern times comparable to the poetic books in that volume.

Beginning now with Homer, and coming down through Virgil, Dante, Ariosto, Tasso, Shakespeare, and Milton, there is nothing in all their magnificent march of rhyme to equal the song of Miriam, under the pealing numbers of which the old hills of Araby trembled, while the obedient waves rolled back upon the chariots and horsemen of the pursuing foe until they all slept beneath their watery shroud. So also of the one hundred and fourth Psalm, which

as an emanation of genius, and as a specimen of descriptive poetry, will bear competition with any production of the past or present. It is a song commemorative of the power and providence of God. It begins with an apostrophe to him as one "clothed with honor and majesty; one who covereth himself with light as a garment; who stretcheth out the heavens like the curtain of a tent; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind." From this apostrophe the psalmist next exhibits the power of God, as seen in creation and as manifested in the flood, when "the waters stood above the mountains," and when, having accomplished their ministry of wrath, "at his rebuke they fled; at the voice of his thunder they hasted away." And after having depicted this scene of devastation, he succeeds it by one of amity and fruitfulness, thus exquisitely described: "He sendeth the spring into the valleys which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of heaven have their habitation which sing among the branches." He goes on then to represent the earth as pouring from her lap abundance of food for man and beast. He next notes the habits of various animals, and reviews the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, bringing day and night and the changes of seasons. He discloses the depths of the great wide sea, together with the endless diversities of its strange population, and deduces from this the goodness of God in providing for the

happiness of living things innumerable, "both great and small." Passing by other portions of this song, we call your attention particularly to one passage, the picturesque reality of which cannot but be perceived by every man who has a heart to feel horror, or an eye to rejoice in beauty: "Thou makest darkness, and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches."

The poetry of the Bible necessarily partakes of the times and circumstances under which it was written, and is therefore unlike all other poetry.

The Jews, as we have said, were the founders of a chosen race of people, who were to be the inheritors of the earth. Their religious creed was somewhat chaotic, unformed, obscure, but infinite. It embraced God, and reached out into an eternity where its glory was to be manifested. It appealed to the imagination and faith of the worshiper, and was felt most in solitude and under the protecting shadow of immensity. And so too of the poetry of that people and age. It is the poetry of imagination and faith. In one sense it is abstract and disembodied, without form yet full of power, not despising social life yet living in solitude more, and contemplating man not so much in the multitude

as alone in the world, surrounded by the original forms of nature—the rocks, the earth, the sky. It is rarely directed to active and heroic enterprise, but to a recognition of the infinite—the solemn brooding and overshadowing of immensity—to faith in a presiding providence, and resignation to the governing power of the universe. It is pervaded by the thought that God is near to the creature, and that he takes an immediate share in all the affairs of human life. It seems to suppose each man to be a type of the race—an aggregation of the multitude, and a representative of God. In the story of Ruth, for instance, it is as if all the depth of natural affection in the human race was involved in her breast. All these things gave intensity to the poetry of that age, and clothed it with a shadowy grandeur, a weird, wondrous, and overpowering sublimity, not found in the poetry of any other age or people. In the book of Job there is an intensity of passion, and a magnificence and prodigality of imagery beyond any thing even in Homer. And so with all the poetical books of the Old Testament. They abound in metaphors unequalled for boldness and beauty and sublimity, and evince a power and intensity of passion and imagination before which the mind sinks in awe and wonder. And then the imagery employed is always natural—taken from nature, and in harmony with it. The mystic brooding of which we have spoken, while it is vague and unsatisfying, just as nature is, is never jarring. The feeling produced is not the infinite, but a longing for it, such as one often feels in the depths of old woods,

or on the shore of a moaning sea, or beneath the solemn and beautiful light of stars. The soul groans under the pressure of such a feeling. It stretches away from time into infinity, and throbs with a prophecy of the coming glory. This feeling, or something kindred to it, we experience when in communication with the Old Testament bards, and it is this that will give them an everlasting influence over humanity.

Now then, if what we have said of the Bible in these discourses be true, with what emphasis does it appeal to the young to make themselves thoroughly conversant with its contents! In all that has been said, the moral influence of this volume has been lost sight of. We have spoken of it simply as a book—a great book—great in history, in philosophy, and in poetry. In these respects we commend it to the young. We commend it to you on the ground of intellectual sympathy, and in the hope that you all desire knowledge, and are willing to pay the price in study and toil at which knowledge may be had. We commend it especially to those of you whom the fortunes of war have left with the burden of labor, of daily drudgery for a support, upon you, but who are fired with an ambition to win an honorable place in the ranks of thought and culture. With the Bible as your text-book, you may win that place in spite of poverty.

Read the history of the early preachers of Methodism, and be encouraged. Many of them, without scholastic training, with no helps from professors of theology, with nothing but the Bible and God and

nature, worked their way up from poverty and ignorance to the measure of giants in intellect and influence. They went forth with this book, from the plow and work-bench and desk, on their circuits, and while pondering its mighty truths amid the grandeur of hills and mountains and forests, the sleeping forces within were stirred; and so going on from the mastery of one great truth to the conquest of another, these bearing them on into the regions uninvaded by human science and philosophy, they stood at last priests in the temple of knowledge, and princes in the kingdom of mind. If you too would triumph over poverty and labor in this competition for knowledge, begin at once the systematic study of this book. There is no branch of learning that it does not furnish. If you want history, it is here. If you would be learned in philosophy, her utterances come clear and distinct from these pages. If you would lap your soul in the music of song, here are numbers before whose high harmony the archangels in heaven might well stand uncovered of their crowns. Make it your first book then. Imbue your minds with its great thoughts. Lay hold upon its sublime truths, and be lifted by them up into all noble living, and then you will find that they have power not only to crown you in the world of mind, but to enthrone you also amid the pomp and splendor of heaven.

Providence.

“What profit should we have, if we pray unto him?” Job xxi. 15.

YOU have sometimes heard men ask, I dare say, “What is the use of praying?” It is a question as old as the time of Job, as we may learn from the text, and was founded then, as now, in a belief in the doctrine of necessity and a disbelief in that of providence.

Those who believe what this question implies, whether in the Church or out, are materialists; and it would astonish some of you to know how many professing Christians in all denominations are drifting toward this form of materialism. They have become practical believers in necessity. The Almighty, they argue, has put his whole universe, including human intelligences, under the control of laws which are founded in wisdom, and which will in the end, work out the highest possible good for his creatures. These laws, they say, like their Author, are fixed and unchangeable; and hence they can see no use in prayer. The machine has been wound up; the Being who made it and set it in operation has retired, and all that we can do is to stand in the places assigned us while this myste-

rious clock of destiny runs on through the ages, and along the circuit of eternity. As one has quaintly said, the "world is turned into a great mill, established on certain principles, for the grinding out of certain results, and into the hopper all this great aggregate of individuals is poured like grain to be ground." This theory looks reasonable enough to superficial observers. It seems to them a logical deduction from the known principles of science. Thousands of them adopt it and taunt the humble believer in a watching and answering God with such questions as, "What good can you get through prayer that you would not get without prayer? What profit will it bring? How can your God answer prayer now? What, in a word, is the use of praying at all?"

I am free to say that when it can be scientifically demonstrated that law, which all admit is a thing born of the Almighty, has been put in his place and that no more effects can be wrought in this world than those which fall out in the way of ordinary and unhelped causation, I will then give up prayer. When that demonstration is made to my perfect satisfaction, as an honest man I will acknowledge that the New Testament is an amiable kind of book in its way, but one whose teachings will have become obsolete, and whose doctrines will have gone down before scientific refutation.

There is not a reasonable doubt that God has placed matter and mind under a wise system of laws, that these laws are sufficient for all the ordinary purposes of life, and that a wise employment and application of them will add to the progress of

the human race. These concessions are willingly made to science as one of the almoners of God's bounty. By all means, too, let men acquaint themselves fully with these laws, for there is nothing in them adverse to revealed truth. In fact, men will never be as good Christians as they might be until they become more thoroughly acquainted with the laws of their being—until they understand how their bodies are put together, how their minds act, and how nature works.

I rejoice in the belief that science is yet to be the grand interpreter of unrevealed truth, and that all the great characteristic elements of that truth will in the end be corroborated instead of harmed by the progress of natural science. I believe that this progress will lay a surer foundation for faith in God's active interference in human affairs than could have existed without it, and that in proportion as men become devoutly learned in science will their faith in prayer and in God's providence gain strength. I will even go so far as to concede fully that there are respects in which natural laws are beyond the reach of all human interference and control, and which no human want or prayer can change. There are, for instance, certain spheres in which light and heat cannot be changed; there are certain attractions which perform in their own way their own work, and which man has no power to reach or affect; and it is just as certain that there is in God's system of nature another class of laws which come close to us, and whose office is to minister to human life, under the volitions too of

the human mind. Now then, these are either modifications of great laws or they are laws distinct and separate. It matters not in which category you place them in this argument, for the point I make, as the ground and justification of prayer, is that these laws come within the range of human volition, and are made to perform certain functions as ministers to man through the power and influence of prayer.

I take this position now, and I beg you to observe carefully its statement and to follow patiently its classification—namely, that God has made the agencies of nature which concern human life so that they are under the regulation and direction of the human mind; that in point of fact these agencies, or natural laws, can only be brought to their greatest possible fruitfulness and service when regulated and directed by the human mind; and it is in the maintenance of this position that I hope to satisfy you that there is nothing in the system of laws under which God has placed the universe of mind and matter to prevent his hearing and answering the prayers of his creatures. Infidel science assumes the perfection of all natural laws, and upon this assumption she contends that prayer can do no good. If the assumption be true, the deduction is true also. The whole argument, then, turns upon whether or not natural law is perfect. I deny that it is, and hold that those natural laws which lie nearest to us, and which most intimately concern our daily happiness, can only be fully developed into fruitfulness by human volition. And now, to

prove this, let us look at some of these natural laws, some that we are familiar with, that we in a measure understand—let us take up some of these and see if the human mind has not made them more fruitful of good to us than they were in their natural state.

1. Take first the law of electricity as an illustration. This law has its own running grounds and pastures, as you all know, where nature allows it to disport itself without hinderance. In this wide field it does a great work—a work beyond human reach or knowledge—a work too of some profit to the system of nature in which it operates; but so far as the ordinary purposes of civilized life go, it does little or nothing for man until he masters it by volition, and teaches it to serve him. Infidel science tells us that it is perfect in itself, and yet observation shows you that not until human intelligence takes hold of it does it attain to any very great fruitfulness to human want and pleasure. Human intelligence has the power to take in hand this natural law now, and without violating it at all, but simply by regulating and directing it, convert it into a great positive good. What was before lawless, and beyond control, becomes a patient drudge, running swifter races for human convenience than were ever run before. It has in this way become a servant to thought, so that now above the sea, and even under the sea, the law of electricity bears greetings from one nation to another, and performs an important office in civilization.

2. Take the law of light as another illustration.

In its natural state it is always at work, day and night—always running its journeys through the universe, always sending out its sun-flashes and its reflections of radiance from the faces of its moons, and when sun and moon are hid, making night holy with the trembling glory of stars. All this, though, is but its pastime, and the good done is general, and not special. It is only when man's mind seizes it that its ministrations become special and particular. Under the mastery of his volition it is brought into our dwellings; is reared along our coasts, so that great ships sail on securely in the dark and past dangerous reefs; is sent into the country to gladden the home of the laborer, and into the halls of mirth and festivity where bright eyes flash and costly jewels sparkle in its splendor; into the chamber where the poet dreams and writes, and into the dungeon where the prisoner sighs and weeps. Man's mind takes the reins of this law in his hands, and does with it what Phaeton could not do—drives it whithersoever he will. He can also put in it the power of a living pencil, so that at his bidding it becomes an artist and paints all manner of beautiful pictures. He makes it a special and particular ministry to our wants, our tastes, and our pleasures. And yet, in the face of all this, the materialistic philosophy of the age has the effrontery to tell us that natural laws are perfect in themselves, and that we have no power to regulate and control them. What I have said shows to the satisfaction of the least child here that we do control them.

3. Take water as the next illustration. It too

has a certain round of grand effects, which it is forever performing without leave or license from man. It has its own lines of travel, which it keeps up with regularity and order. Some of these it is beyond human power to change. The ocean disdains his control, and will not wear his fetters. Its murmurings are the soft lyrics of its freedom, and the wild roar of its waves make up its thunder-shout of liberty. The old Polar Sea—the only mystery now left among the oceans of the globe—has rolled for ages, by day and night, in summer and winter, with no eye to watch it but God's. That mighty, unexplored wilderness of mysterious water does what it will in its cold, dreary, sublime solitude. But independent of man as these empires of water may be, and are in many respects, it is nevertheless true that water is dependent on him for doing many things which it could not do but for his volition and intelligence. While it works for the general good, it is in unfettered obedience to its own laws; but when it works for the special benefit of man, it works under his control. He attempts no violation of its laws; he simply regulates them—forces them out of lines where nature set them running, and compels them into his service. In this way he draws water into canals, where vessels laden with commerce pass; causes it to convert barren heaths into fruitful gardens; brings it up through pipes into his chamber; sets it to turning machinery of every possible sort, and for the production of all possible things; and makes of it a common highway for traffic among the peoples of the globe. Now,

how many of these things could water do if the mind of man did not help it? The things which natural laws can do without human volition, after all that carping philosophers tell us, are neither so many nor so wonderful as the things they do, and can only do, under direction of human intelligence and will.

4. Take heat as another illustration of the truth of my position. The sun stands in God's material system as the source of heat. It is the great fireplace of the universe, and its heat regulates the seasons. When you think of the warmth which this grand furnace is forever engendering, and of its adaptation to man's general good, you are awed into profound reverence at the wisdom of the Almighty; and yet, if you will compare what this law does in its general course with what it does under the dominion of man's mind—what it does, for instance, in the forge, in the stove and range, in the furnace which pours summer into our dwellings all the year round, in the locomotive along railroad tracks, in the factory where it turns innumerable wheels and spindles, in the steam-ship which with its lungs of fire and breath of flame plunges its way through storm and tempest to some distant mart—if you will compare the two, I say, you will be compelled to admit that great as is this law when running along the appointed channels of nature, and as much as it may contribute to our comfort and happiness, it is made increasingly great and useful when man's mind forces it to become a particular ministry to human convenience and want.

5. Look also at what the mind can do in regulating the laws of nature so as to improve the character and value of her productions—her fruits and metals, for instance. Intelligence can take the common crab-apple of the woods and by culture make it a nutritious and valuable fruit. Nature furnishes the material, but mind shapes it into utility. Her mountains are filled with metals, but you might dig them all down and never find a plow, an ax, or a telescope ready made to hand and for use. She has the material, but she does not shape it into usefulness. When was she ever known to make a common jack-knife, or grate, or steam-engine? It takes mind, human intelligence and thought, to do this. She has great resources, and is a great general good, but it is only under man's control and regulation that her vast and inexhaustible supplies become special and particular ministers of good to the human race.

Now, in this discussion I have ignored all metaphysical reasoning, and confined myself to familiar illustrations which show that while nature has a certain crude general function, which natural laws perform of themselves and without any regard to man, these laws are made to be vitalized and directed to a higher development and usefulness by the control and under the direction of the human mind and will. They show that the laws of the globe can be taken hold of by man's will and directed as really as he can take hold of and direct the laws of the body; and that these secondary effects of natural laws are just as much a part of their

nature and are just as important as are the primary effects.

What I contend for in this discussion is that while natural laws do in a certain way influence and control man, they are in the effects produced equally controlled by man, and equally dependent on him. In other words, it is clear to my mind that if nature were to abandon man, he would be ruined; and that if he were to abandon nature, the good she does would be general, and not special. Let nature forget his body, and his heart would cease to beat; let her forget the universe, and the pulsations of endless electrical currents would be suspended, and the result would be the stagnation of death. On the other hand, let man forget nature, and her ministries of special good would cease at once. Let man stop regulating nature and controlling her laws so as to make her of use to him, and this goodly city would soon be a heap of brick and mortar—beautiful gardens would relapse into fields of thistles, the fruits of orchards would degenerate into the crab-apple of the woods, cultivated seeds would return to their original poverty, and all the special good he has brought out of electricity and light and water and heat would be lost to the world. All that I have said demonstrates that while man needs nature, nature needs man; and that it is his mind that brings her laws up to their fullest development and makes them fruitful of special good to his race.

All this babble about the inflexibility and fixity of natural laws is against reason and facts. Man

can and does control nature so as to make these laws a special ministry to him. And now I ask, If man can do this, cannot God who instituted these laws do it? Then, what becomes of that dogma of materialism which says that because the Almighty has placed his whole universe under a system of law prayer is a superstition of the Church? If, as I have shown, it is in the power of the human mind to so control and direct natural laws as to make them minister directly to human want and convenience, in ways too which but for human intelligence they never would or could have done, is it not in the power of the Divine mind to do as much or more for his creatures in answer to their prayers? To deny this is to make man greater than the Almighty. Therefore, I hold—and I hold it not only because it is taught in the Bible, but because it accords with reason—that there are millions of results that never would have taken place in the ordinary course of nature, but which are occurring every day and hour in answer to prayer. They are brought about by the mind of God in view of human needs and because of human entreaty. He brings them about too not by violating his laws, but by so controlling and directing them as to make them the channels of his beneficence to his needy children. This is my view of the doctrine of special providence, and it is my ground and warrant for prayer.

O brethren, I want you to take in the full force of my argument. Look at it now. By a wise use of natural laws man can make the earth fruitful, the

seasons serviceable, the mountains useful, and the sea a convenience. He can seize upon natural laws, and without violating them, but simply by directing them, he can make them increase his fortune, add to his comfort, and promote his health. Now, if men can do this for themselves, cannot God do it for them? If men can do this for their children, out of pure love and in answer to their desires, cannot and will not the Almighty God do as much for his dear children who cry to him out of the depths of their spiritual poverty and need? Therefore, I appeal to you who have honestly doubted the utility of prayer to know if there is any moral or scientific reason, or even probability, why God should not be able to hear and answer your prayer and mine when offered for a real good. That he is able to do it, you cannot deny; that he can do it consistently with his system of laws, I think I have made plain by my illustrations. And, now, that he will do it, depends upon how his children pray, and upon what they pray for. And this brings me to inquire briefly into the conditions on which his children may expect their prayers to be answered.

In the first place, he will not, as a general thing, do for his children what they can do for themselves. You have no right to ask for any thing in opposition to this rule. It is a part of his plan of training to make you put out the whole of your own strength first of all, which at last is only using his natural gifts; but when this fails, then you have a right, on certain other conditions, to call on him for help. One of these conditions is that you ought to do the

thing you are trying to do, or that you really need the thing you ask for, and that you need it in the form you ask it. Of this he must be the judge, and hence all our askings should be in submission to his right to determine for us what we ought to do and what we really need. Another condition is that you do not ask him to do for you what, notwithstanding you are unable to do now of yourself, you may be able after a longer course of training to do. He has nowhere promised to do for us at present what we after a proper course of development will by and by have accruing strength to do for ourselves. These things explain why some of our prayers are never answered, and why others are so long being answered. Many of our most impassioned prayers are born in pure selfishness; are offered as dictations to the Almighty, as if we were sovereign and he merely our agent; are the pleadings of our own judgments as to what we ought to do and have; while others are for strength which the Father sees it would be best for us to receive through the natural order of Christian development. In this last instance he has the power to do what we ask, but he delays for our good. He has the feeling too, for his love for us is tenderer than a mother's, and this very love often constrains him to withhold what in our ignorance we plead for. But if what you ask for approves itself to his fatherly wisdom and love as a real need, and he sees that having done what you could and failed, you come to him for help, he will give it. You have his word for this. You have examples in his Word of his

having done this for his children of old, and if you are an experienced Christian your own life abounds with illustrations of this principle. You have the right to go up along the path of your weakness and say: "Father, I have done what I could; now hear my prayer, and do for me what I cannot do for myself." And if it is for a thing really needed, and which the Father sees will be a blessing to you, he will answer your prayer sooner or later.

Most of us do not understand what prayer really is. It is not demanding of God that he would give us what in our poor, imperfect judgment we think we need. It is asking him to give us what he knows we need. It is telling him that we are in want, that we look to him to have our wants supplied, and that we leave it to his infinite wisdom and goodness to choose the means and the time for supplying them. It is our privilege to tell him just what we think we need, but it must be in the spirit in which the Master presented his wants in the garden—the spirit that says at the end of all our askings, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." The true nature of prayer is to ask God to bless us, leaving him to determine as to what would be a blessing. Your little child, I will suppose, wants water. On your table perhaps is an inviting goblet, containing what resembles water, and what the child thinks is water, but what you know to be deadly poison. Your little darling entreats you for it, but you wisely refuse, knowing that it would bring death. Knowing that your child wants water, you remove what in its ignorance it took

for water and hasten to bring it what it really wants. In this case you answer its prayer not in the way your child asked for an answer, but in a way that was wiser and for the child's good. And so will the Father in heaven answer the prayers of his children—not always giving them the things they ask for, but the things he sees they need, and at the time best for them. Therefore, the true spirit of prayer is a deep sense of want and a calm trusting, resting of the soul on God. It may have words, or it may be the silent adoration of love; it may voice itself in cries, or like the babe folded on the mother's heart, it may lead the soul to look its needs and its trust as it gazes into the face of the loving, watching Father.

But I have detained you long enough, and cannot, as I intended, dwell on the exceeding profit of prayer. The great point was to show you that God is both able and willing to answer us when we pray, and that this in nowise comes in contact with the system of laws under which he has placed us all. My aim has been to get you to think out this question to its deep foundations for yourselves, so that you might see how impregnable are the defenses of our holy religion, and to show you that all acceptable prayer must begin and end in submission. "Thy will be done" should be the girdle around all your askings; bound thus, you have only to lay them at the foot of the Throne in order to demonstrate every day of your lives the profitableness of prayer. There is an old rabbinical legend, illustrative of prayer, which Longfellow has embodied in

some beautiful lines, with which I will close this discourse:

Have you read in the Talmud of old,
In the legends the rabbins have told,
Of the limitless realms of the air;
Have you read it—the marvelous story
Of Sandalphon, the angel of glory—
Sandalphon, the angel of prayer?

How erect at the outermost gates
Of the city celestial he waits

With his feet on the ladder of light,
That crowded with angels unnumbered
By Jacob was seen as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night?

The angels of wind and of fire,
Chant only one hymn, and expire

With the song's irresistible stress;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,

With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels the deathless,
Sandalphon stands listening breathless
To sounds that ascend from below;

From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore,
In the fervor and passion of prayer;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging their crosses,
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
Into garlands of purple and red;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the city immortal,
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend I know—
A fable, a phantom, a show
Of the ancient rabbinical lore;
Yet the old mediæval tradition,
The beautiful, the strange superstition,
But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
All throbbing and panting with stars,
Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon the angel, expanding
His pinions in nebulous bars;

And the angel, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
To quiet its fever and pain.

Forbidding Children to Come to Christ.

“Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.” Luke xviii. 16.

I HAVE endeavored in a former discourse to show that under the Christian dispensation infants are entitled to membership in the Church of God, and that parents, in bringing them into the Church by baptism, place themselves under the most solemn obligation to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

My remarks at this time will be intended for Christian parents who have entered their children into the school of Christ, and who, it is to be supposed, really desire their spiritual welfare. Now, while nothing is farther from their intention than the thought of alienating their children from Christ—while they are anxious to have them come to him, and would be shocked to think that they were in any way hindering their approach—while this is true, we say, of most Christian parents, it is equally true that many of them are in one way or another doing the very thing which, when you talk to them, they seem most anxious to guard against. They do not in so many words “forbid” their children’s becoming religious, yet their conduct, the man-

agement of their home affairs—in fact, their general course of life—is in very many cases a standing prohibition to the piety of their children. Their general line of policy becomes, contrary to all their really good intentions, an obstacle to this piety. Its tendency is to alienate their children from the Church, to embitter them against religion, to push them away from Christ, to discourage them in their attempts to think and act aright, and to drive them to the world for enjoyment. In this way there are thousands who, although they have had their children baptized, and really desire their salvation, do as effectually “forbid” them going to Christ as though they had in so many words actually commanded them not to go.

There are good and sufficient reasons, my brethren, why so many children of the Church ripen into men and women of the world; and these reasons, you may rest assured, lie outside of the grace of God, which, when reënforced by parental assiduity and faithful culture, will almost invariably make children “wise unto salvation” as they grow up. The fault is not in the gospel, nor in Christ, who is always knocking at the door of the heart of childhood and begging admittance; the fault is in us, to whose training childhood has been committed. We do not rise to a proper appreciation of the awful responsibilities that gather about the relation of parent and child. We do not sufficiently study—earnestly and prayerfully study—our duty as parents; we do not devote ourselves to its performance. We give too much thought

and time and toil to the temporal welfare of our children, and too little to their spiritual well-being. We do not look into the peculiarities of childhood, nor think of the variety of character it presents—a variety often seen in our own households; and as a consequence our government is often wanting in adaptability. Some of us are too indulgent; others are too severe; while others still are both indulgent and severe, just as the mood inclines them. In short, we act so as to give our children a discouraged feeling, and sometimes a bitter, prejudiced feeling in reference to religion; and although we may not in so many words “forbid” their coming into the Church by a public profession of faith in Christ, our daily conduct constitutes a standing barrier to their salvation. I know these are grave charges, but I honestly believe them well founded; and if they are true, and you are a good Christian, you will rejoice to have them pointed out to you. If you are an honest Christian, and as such ardently desire to see your children pious, you will love the preacher who shows you the wrong which you may be doing unconsciously, and will address yourself to the work of correcting it when it is discovered. Therefore, I propose to point out a few of the most common ways by which parents are unintentionally forbidding their children from going to Christ.

Childhood is the period of susceptibility, of tenderness of impulse, of imitativeness, and requires to be treated with exceeding delicacy and kindness in order to its religious development. It is the instinct of nature for children to look up to their

parents and to regard them with reverence, for each child to think his parents superior to all others. His father is his type of courage and capacity, while his mother is his model of love and goodness. I need not pause here to show you how natural it is, in a relation of this kind, for the parental tone and spirit to flow down upon the child as the sunlight falls upon the opening flower, and for it to enter into all his future life. Now then, in this tender relation impressions go out from parents and are taken in by children. The one gives, the other receives; and this giving and this receiving, in the matter of impressions, of thoughts, of opinions, and of habits, are going on all through childhood, so that when the child matures into the man he takes with him into the busy scenes of life the parental impress, and as a general thing is good or evil just as the tone and spirit of the parents were good or evil. He stands there a devout Christian or a hardened sinner, just as they molded him in childhood. Just as they led him to Christ or forbade his going will be manifest in manhood the good or evil tendencies of his character. How important, then, that as parents you give earnest heed while I attempt to discover to you how without intending it you may be alienating your children from the ways of piety!

Paul, in giving advice to Christian parents, says, "Provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged," in which he seems to have alluded to children who are in the more advanced stages of childhood, or in what we call the period of youth; yet his advice will hold good as to my little chil-

dren. We learn from it that if parents would not discourage their children from piety, they must avoid those provocations to anger, which often spring from the most trivial causes, and which generally grow out of their own ungoverned and groundless passion. And this habit of anger, while it is one of the most common of domestic evils, is one whose influence is most potent in keeping children away from the path of piety. It becomes this by that hardening process which it is sure to produce, and which is so successful in resisting the influence of God's Spirit; and what makes it worse is the fact that parents sometimes make it a part of the religious nurture of their children. They make it a point of duty to fly into a passion, to brew a storm of indignation at every misdemeanor or childish vagary of their children, in order, as they seem to think, to properly impress the wrong-doers with the magnitude of their offenses. There are multitudes of Christian fathers who never attempt to correct their children until urged to it by passion, and there are just as many mothers who cause their children to grow up in a climate of storms, and who make it a part of their religion to keep up a perpetual warfare in their household. From morning till noon, and from noon till night, from the cradle up to childhood, and from childhood up to manhood, home is made resonant with the voice of scolding, until the higher nature of their children is completely worn down and they sink into a sort of atrophy which is the very essence of all discouragement. They bear its legible imprint in their little faces, in their averted

eyes, in the forlorn expression of their countenances, in their frightened look and shy manner. These things all testify that continued outbursts of parental peevishness and passion have effectually destroyed every thing hopeful and good in their young souls, and that they sit and talk and eat and sleep and live in a perpetual dread of a father's fierce indignation or a mother's turbulent temper.

The glad, joyous impulses of childhood constitute the Godward side of the soul; but when these are dried up, as they often are, in the furnace—the ever-burning furnace—of parental peevishness and petulance and passion, there is nothing left in the childish soul that can reach out after God. It relapses into sullenness and indifference; and a bitter prejudice against the religion of such parents is the inevitable consequence.

Another common way of discouraging children, which many otherwise very good parents fall into, is the habit of laying too many prohibitions upon their children. Having given them to God in baptism, and wishing to do their whole duty by them, they demand and expect too much. Their religious nurture is made up of innumerable and never-ending forbiddings, under which childhood becomes impatient, and its little warm, quick-beating heart grows restive, and sometimes rebellious. Parental authority is converted into a towering Sinai, from which the child hears nothing but “Thou must not do this, and thou must not do that,” until in his little wayward heart he begins to despise a religion in which, as his parents have taught it to him, there is

no bright spring-time, no bursting bud nor opening flower, no bloom nor fragrance, nothing but hard, dry self-denial and duty. Such a child lives under a kind of sledge-hammer of commandment, which as fast as he attempts to rise beats him back to the ground; and the result is that by the time he passes into early youth, and under a more loving and genial training would be inclined to make a public profession of his faith in Christ, he has learned to heartily despise that faith, and rejoices that the time has come when he can escape from its incessant prohibitions. The better course for the parent to pursue is to forbid as few things as possible, and then enforce what is forbidden. He should never forget that his child is a child, and that what in manhood he might accept voluntarily is most distasteful to him in childhood. He should study to present the brighter and more beautiful aspects of religion, and in this way win the child's heart to the love and service of God. There is no surer way of alienating childhood from religion than this perpetual plying it with prohibitions. Rather, teach it the power of love, and you will have called forth its affections; and when these are won, all the rest will follow in their order.

Another effectual way of forbidding children to come to Christ is to be found in that principle of absolutism which some Christian parents adopt in the government of their children. They govern them in a hard, unfeeling, despotic way, as though they were machines instead of intelligent souls. They make their word law, as every parent should; but they do

it in such a harsh, overbearing manner as to completely reduce the filial relation, which is so suggestive of tenderness and sympathy and love, into one of absolute serfdom. The father now is the child's type of God; hence any thing that opens a breach between the father and the child, that puts the child from him in the matter of feeling, of love and sympathy—any thing that does this will in the very same proportion shut the child away from that God of whom the father is a type. Now then, if the baptized child sees in his father these elements of tyranny, he will naturally think of God as a tyrant, and will drink in a prejudice against religion. If his father's rule is the rule of a despot, his approaches to him will be rare, and when made at all will be made in fear and trembling; and all this will give color to his apprehensions of the Father in heaven. The very guilelessness and openness of the heart of childhood naturally impart to it a beautiful courage in its approaches to God, and it is this that makes the time of childhood so ingenuously open to religion; yet if through parental tyranny and despotism this courage be changed to a feeling of dread and abject submission, children will think of God only with a feeling of fear, and they will recoil from him as from a harsh and cruel tyrant. Remember, then, that as you impress upon your children ideas of your fatherhood, so will be their ideas of the Father in heaven; and that if you teach them to look upon you with feelings of awe only—to shrink from your presence, to regard you as a foe to their happiness, to contemplate you simply

as an impersonation of authority—they will have the same apprehension of God. When this feeling of dread takes possession of the heart of childhood, through parental instrumentality, there is little or no hope of witnessing its early consecration to God. When parents by their sternness forbid the early piety of their children, they so alienate them from spiritual things, and so weaken their faith, that no presentation of the gentleness and love of Christ, which as Christians they may offer their children in after years, can reässure the broken courage of the soul. That courage will be gone—will have been put out by parental severity, by household despotism, by a tyranny in which there was no sympathy with childhood, no tenderness, no love, no confidence; and the wickedness of the children will in the great day of account be laid at the door of parents who by this principle of domestic absolutism will have as effectually forbidden their children to go to Christ as they would had they sternly commanded them not to go.

Incessant fault-finding is another way of forbidding them. Now, the love of approbation, which is a part of human nature, is never stronger than in childhood; and nothing so discourages the child in its efforts to do right as the bad habit which parents fall into of blaming it for every trivial fault of which it may be guilty. Children many times commit mistakes and fall into errors from inexperience and ignorance, and while they are trying to do right. Besides this, childhood is the age of impulse and of activity, and may be expected to make many

sad mistakes, without intending to make them; and the error of many parents is an indiscriminate condemnation of every thing their children do. They seem to think it a matter of true faithfulness that they be not too easily pleased lest their children should take up loose impressions of the strictness of duty. They do not deal with their children in this respect as God deals with them. Notwithstanding their unfaithfulness to him, their shortcomings, their faults, and their mistakes, he smiles upon them for what he sees them trying to do, and encourages them thus to still greater efforts; and in this he exemplifies the course we should pursue with our imperfect and erring children. The parent who is forever finding fault with his child, who will be satisfied with nothing short of perfection, who will see nothing good in his child as long as he beholds any thing evil in him, who from a mistaken apprehension of duty closes his mouth against all commendation, and is eager only to condemn—the parent, we say, who does this, whether he intends it or not, is pursuing a course that will keep his children away from Christ.

There are some parents who not only find fault with and fail to commend their children, but who keep up a show of displeasure, when their children do wrong, long after the wrong has been acknowledged, for the purpose, as they allege, of preventing its repetition; and this too is a habit which prejudices the mind of childhood against religion. It is certainly proper for parents to show displeasure at wrong-doing; but when it takes the form of a

grudge, and is continued after the wrong is repented of, its effect is to harden the heart of the child into sullen aversion, and to make him think of God as one to whom the same tariff of displeasure is to be paid all through life; and when this comes to be the settled thought of childhood, it leaves no room for early piety.

Again, that miserable anxiety about their children which some parents are forever showing, and by which their children are kept in an eternal torment of repression, becomes a hinderance to early piety. Just think what a torture it would be to you to stay a week or to take a journey with one of these anxious, nervous, fidgety people, who are always climbing mountains before they are reached, always anticipating some trouble or misfortune, forever on the lookout for some terrible happening! Then, what think you of the children of these kind of people—the hapless little ones who are shut up with them day by day and year by year, who all through childhood have to listen to this monotone of anxiety, this unceasing whine of foreboding and fear? How otherwise than overcast with clouds can their sky become, because of this continual worrying and fretting on the part of their parents? If such children do not catch the infection, which is most likely, they will be apt to run to the other extreme of recklessness and defiance, and disrespect to such parents. And if the worry of their parents has been of a religious cast, it will plant bitterness in the child's heart toward a religion which has been commended to him only in groans and with faces long

with sanctimonious austerity and anxious with a sort of chronic care. Nothing will make religion so repulsive to a child as to have it urged upon him in a whining and misgiving way—as to make the voice of parental solicitude a sort of bagpipe melody, to which he listens until it becomes a torment. The parent who would not discourage his child must avoid this rock. He must make his child feel that although there are dangers ahead he trusts him and has confidence that he will conquer them. He may be anxious for him, he may and ought to be burdened with prayer for him, yet he must take on hope and confidence, and by a manifestation of these in himself awaken them in his child, who from self-respect will then exert himself to meet the expectations of his trusting parents. But if this range of adventure is curtailed, if you withhold this trust, and give way to a fretting anxiety that becomes a torture to your child—never letting him play for fear that he will get hurt, never losing sight of him for fear of some accident, binding him perpetually to the end of the apron-string, and trusting him in nothing—if you pursue this nervous, anxious, worrying policy with your child, you are fencing him off from piety more certainly than if you were to interdict it with your lips.

Another effectual way of forbidding early piety consists in an application of tests of character which are not appropriate to childhood. The very best of parents fall into this error; and what is worse, they make it a part of the religious training of their children. The child, for instance, under some prov-

ocation loses his temper. Now, good temper being a test of Christian character, and having been betrayed into a momentary loss of his, the parent charges upon him that he has a bad heart, and goes straight to work to convince him that he is not a Christian child. What is the result? Why, the child gives up all effort to be religious. He ceases to pray, or if he prays it is with a feeling of misgiving and distrust, of alienation and dawning enmity to God and religion. Now, that parent we will suppose is a Christian, and to the child he is a type of the Father above. What he says the child believes, and this charge of irreligion upon the child, because of a momentary loss of temper, takes away hope, and oftentimes drives the child into despair and wickedness. Ah, Christian parents, where would be your hope if God were to hold you to the same strict account? If your child, so little practiced in self-government, is to be condemned for every irritation and loss of temper, how ought God to judge you for not preserving that uniform serenity which is easier to your riper years than the self-control you look for in your little child is to him? You forget, when on the holy Sabbath you condemn your child and charge him with being a bad boy because you witness in him an overeagerness for play, or an inattention to his Sunday-school lesson—you forget, when you sternly condemn him for such natural errors as these, that you, who have outgrown your love of play in your love of gain, were troubled all through the sermon, and even as you knelt at the communion-table, with some worldly enterprise

which, notwithstanding all your efforts to put it away, would keep thrusting itself before you in the house of God; you forget this when you make the joyful ebullience of your child conclusive proof against the religiousness of his impulsive heart. Do not forget it in the future, and when you remember it, be slow to condemn your child for what is less sinful in him than this worldliness is in you. If sometimes the little child is carried away by exuberant life and playfulness, is that as bad as being cankered by the love of gain, or absorbed by the desires of a grasping, eager, worldly manhood? The balances, if rightly adjusted, will be found against manhood and in favor of childhood; for the sins of childhood are open and ingenuous, and should be judged leniently, while the sins of manhood are sins of gravity, of prudence, of self-seeking, of an age which wears or ought to wear the aspect of sobriety and dignity, and should therefore be the more severely judged. Now then, if manhood is not to be accounted as destitute of piety, because it has its faults and failings, does not this manhood commit a grievous wrong when it condemns childhood as wholly irreligious because of faults and failings which are natural to its period? I do not believe that God judges children in this way, and therefore I hold that it is wrong in parents to assume that even wayward children have no piety, and to charge this lack upon them because they are not as perfect as the angels in heaven. They will often err, for to err is human; they may, and no doubt often do, falter—yet if they give

evidence that they love what is good, and are trying to be good, there is just as good reason to hope that their hearts have been touched by the Spirit of God as there is to hope that you, their parents, whose service of God is full of imperfection, are striving to follow the leadings of that Spirit. We must judge children as children and be careful not to discourage them by telling them that they are necessarily without any religion because they are fond of play, and are often found stumbling and faltering in their efforts to do right. Brethren, this is true of us all. We are none of us perfect. We all stumble and falter sometimes. The best we can do is to try to do right and to keep trying. Let this spirit run through your entire treatment of children. If your child in trying to be religious makes mistakes, as he certainly will—if in his efforts to walk in the ways of the Lord you see him halting sometimes, and even falling prone upon the ground—do not upbraid him, but do as your Heavenly Father does with you: help him to get up again, tell him to lean upon you, offer him your support, make your course toward him an illustration of the forgiving, loving, helping nature of God; and then you may expect that as your child grows in years he will grow in piety. * But if you pursue the opposite course, your whole life and treatment of him will have but one tendency, and that will be to forbid his coming to Christ.

I cannot close this brief and incomplete enumeration of parental errors without alluding to another, which is almost universal in our Christian de-

nomination. I allude to the common disposition among parents to deny to their baptized children an early recognition of their membership in the Church, and an admission to the holy sacrament. This cautious exclusion of the children of the Church from all the privileges of the Church is, as I honestly think, a great mistake, and results in most cases in their total abandonment to the world. The parent that adopts and pursues it does, beyond all question, forbid children to come to Christ. If what we have said in a former discourse as to infant membership in the Church be true, it holds parents bound to bring their children into the Church by a public profession of their faith and their admission to the table of the Lord just as soon as they are old enough to comprehend the nature and responsibilities of that profession and show a desire to be religious; and if this were done, our children would learn religion from their infancy, just as they learn other things. God will do his part if we do ours. It is our neglect here—our criminal and sinful neglect at this point—that is driving our children from the Church into the world. The child, no matter how mature his mind, nor how beautiful his piety, is held back from a public profession of his faith because, as we think, he is too young to make it, as if years were one of the Scripture evidences of grace. We want him to wait for an experience—a change—for what we call conversion, notwithstanding we gave him to God in infancy by baptism, have been assiduous in his religious training, and have been praying daily

for his regeneration. We seem to have no faith in all we have done, no confidence that God will have fulfilled his part of the covenant. Although we have had our children baptized, we still virtually keep them outside of the fold, to see if they can stand the weather—waiting for an experience which, if we have done our duty, has been going on gradually and imperceptibly from the first lisping cry of infancy up to the moment when the child comes to us perhaps, and says, “Father, when shall I be old enough to be a Christian?” To tell that child to wait is to forbid him to come to Christ; and this is just what thousands are doing. I know of nothing so chilling and disheartening to childhood as this. It makes a mockery of baptism. It neutralizes all that you have done to educate your child religiously. It closes the door of the Church to him. It thrusts him away from the communion. It breaks down his courage, destroys his hope, crushes out his longings to be good, and sends him adrift upon the world, without God and without hope. O it is treatment the most unnatural and cruel, and its commonness explains why so few children of our Communion even so much as think of reëffirming the vows made for them by parents at their baptism, until they have gone on in sin and folly long enough to call for bitter repentance and a sudden conversion. O my brethren, I tell you again, there is a better way, and that as a Church we should seek to find it. Bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and encourage them to an early profession of

their faith in Christ. Do not wait for any particular age. Some are prepared for it at seven; and as a general rule no parent has done his duty whose baptized child goes beyond twelve without formally entering into the Church of Christ and coming to the communion. The longer I live the more deeply impressed I am with the necessity of leading childhood into an open Christian profession, and of making religion as much a thing of education and early training as any other great interest of life. To keep your child back from an open profession of religion is to discourage the very beginnings of godliness, and in nine case out of ten will put hinderances in the way of his salvation from which he will never fully recover.

There are many other ways by which parents forbid the early piety of their children; but we have not time to point them out. We have mentioned enough to make it no wonder that the children of our Church should either go to the world or to other communions, where they hope to find a sympathy which was denied them at home. And what astonishes us is that when we would inaugurate a system of religious worship, as we are trying to do here, that would meet the demands and gratify the taste of the cultivated youth of this age, those very parents whose rigid adherence to old and effete non-essentials in religion has driven their children off into other Churches are the only ones who oppose it. They are not satisfied with forbidding their own children from entering the Church, but seem resolutely set in the purpose of keeping

as many more out as they possibly can, rather than give up their prejudices. While the Church abounds with such parents, we need not marvel that its children wander away into the world, or into other communions; but in the day of judgment there will be terrible reckoning with those who forbade their coming in. There are times in every religiously educated childhood when it is open to the calls of religion. These may be called its flowering seasons, and they will certainly ripen into fruitfulness if the flowers are not broken off by rough handling or discouraging treatment. If these religious affinities are rudely battered down by parental discouragement, there is but one other alternative, and that is the world; and our children, driven away from religion by our mistreatment, will not be slow to try its promises and to test its enjoyments.

O brethren, when I think how prone we all are to treat childhood as if piety were impossible to it; when I recall our misuse, our misconception, our misdirection of its capabilities; when I think of the many and subtle ways in which we forbid our children to come to Christ, when their longing hearts are yearning to come—I do not wonder that so many of them go astray; and my prayer is that as a Church, no matter how others do, you will from henceforth do all you can to bring them under the protection and guidance of Him who said, “Suffer” them “to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.”

Diversity and Contentment in Labor.

“So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering; and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.” Isaiah xli. 7.

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Philippians iv. 11.

MY purpose in addressing you this evening, young gentlemen, will be to show that the present constitution of things requires a diversity of occupations in society, and that when a young man has decided what vocation he intends following he should address himself to its duties in a spirit of contentment, and with that fixed purpose and determination which, if adhered to, will, as a general rule, crown human efforts with success.

This diversity of occupations is seen in the first of the passages of Scripture read, where the carpenter is represented as encouraging the goldsmith, and he that smoothed with the hammer as cheering on him that smote the anvil; while the declaration of the apostle, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,” furnishes an illustration of the spirit in which we should accept and perform our lots and duties in life.

From these scriptures, and from what I have said to you in other discourses, young gentlemen, you will readily apprehend my object in attempting to show you how necessary it is, in our existing social constitution, that there should be a variety in pursuits and labor, and how equally necessary it is for each worker to bring into his occupation such a respect for it as will make him content with it; for to be without this respect is to be discontented, and to be discontented in an occupation is to be unworthy of it, and will bring inevitable failure.

There is, I know, and would have you remember, a certain disquiet which lies at the foundation of all success—a dissatisfaction with what we are and with what we do, and a longing to ascend in the scale of being and doing—a discontent that is divine in its origin, and “from which all growth in excellence proceeds.” It is an element of power, an evidence of capability, and has its birth in the highest and purest inspirations that visit the soul. It is a movement, so to speak, that runs through all life—vegetable, animal, and rational—and its instinctive tendency is upward. Go out into the fields of nature, and there you will see that every thing is growing, climbing, reaching, and towering upward. The great oak, with its centennial crown of leaves, stretches its knotted arms and waves its long palms toward the overhanging clouds. The vine—like tender, dependent woman—searches for supporting strength, and clasping it with passionate fondness pulls itself upward by its delicate fingers. The meek violet,

as it sits in lowly and maidenly modesty, turns its blue eyes toward the sky, and breathes its fragrant wishes heavenward. Even the little lake in the grassy meadow dreams of stars, and has its own bright firmament where the lily on its margin mirrors its beautiful face. It is as if God had said to every animated thing on its entrance into life: "Look up! for there, far above every thing, shines the great white throne; there sits the uncreate perfection; there abides the source of all blessedness; there burns the ineffable fire, at which the torches of all life are lighted. Look up! for by upward looking and longing and striving you are to rise to perfection." There is a discontent, then, that comes from God, and obedience to it is obedience to him, and will be found a grand element of success in any chosen line of life. There is a disquiet, though, which may grow into a disgust for that line of life—a dissatisfaction amounting to contempt for one's lot in life, and for the labors to which the plain hand of Providence sometimes points—which if not guarded against will dig the grave of indolence and bury in it energies which if perseveringly expended will make even the humblest necessary pursuit in life an honor and a success. It is a discontent that has no faith, no hope, no courage, no perseverance, and being without faith in God and out of harmony with the order and operations of his providence, it will make a man unsuccessful in any occupation, in any profession, pursuit, or trade into which he permits it to come.

Now then, in the hope that I may be able to as-

sist you in putting away that bad habit of complaining at what men call their hard lot in life, which all of us are in danger of contracting, and in encouraging you to go forward bravely and manfully in the discharge of the legitimate duties of that lot, and with the sublime determination that, God helping you, you will so act in your occupation as to compel the world to respect it—in this hope, this earnest desire, I ask your attention, young gentlemen, to what is to follow.

I begin, then, by reminding you that the structure of society necessarily demands a variety of industrial pursuits—requires the carpenter, the goldsmith, the smoother with the hammer, and the smiter on the anvil. Society is in one sense an organized system of widely differing but mutually depending duties. It is a vast and vitalized machinery with manifold and diverse cogs and wheels and fixtures, and all necessary to the ongoing of the social machine. It is made up of innumerable departments, many of them unlike many others, yet each having a legitimate relation with all the others, and essential to the general harmony, creating a variety of pursuits, and making this very variety contribute to the unity which crowns the whole. Some, for instance, have to sow, and some have to spin; some must teach, and some must learn; some must open the furrow and plant the seed and gather the crop; some must wield the hammer, and some must drive the plane; some have to make laws, and some must execute them; some must stand in the pulpit, some in the courts of justice, and some at the bed-

side of the sick. Society, as I have said, is a great complicated structure, and requires a variety of professions and pursuits to keep it going. Even its individual enterprises can come to completion only by contributions from more than one of these pursuits. Take the imposing structure across the street there, recently built, as an illustration of the number of occupations that contribute even to one building. First, there was the architect who drew the plan; then came the carpenter to fit the timbers together, the foundry to prepare the iron and nails that go in it, the skill that molded the bricks, the labor that placed them upon the scaffold, the mason that laid them in their places, the glazier with his glass, and the painter with his brush and colors. What a number of occupations were necessary to its erection and preparation for use! Did you think this morning, when you read the *Advertiser* or the *Tribune*, how many varieties of labor were necessary to the publication of a newspaper? Just think of it now. It requires an editor, with his hard-toiling brain-work; a local, who in addition to brains has to wear out shoe-leather hunting up startling items to aid in the digestion of your breakfast; the skill of the compositor; the work of the pressman, to bring the paper out; the newsboy to distribute it—to say nothing of the machinery, of paper-mills, and manufacturers of ink and type, and a hundred other things belonging to a printing establishment, all of which contribute to your morning's enjoyment of a daily newspaper. And so I might bring from every department of business il-

illustrations of the fact that not even an individual enterprise can be carried on without the aid of one or more of the industrial pursuits of life. This proves that this diversity of pursuits is a necessity, and that without it there can be no social progress.

Now then, these necessary pursuits must all be filled by somebody. They are absolute necessities; and I hold that whatever is an absolute necessity is inherently honorable in itself and in its ends, and that therefore any man who does his duty in any necessary calling or pursuit in life is worthy of the esteem and respect of all good men.

I am ashamed to acknowledge that the popular sentiment in this country is against the respectability of hand-labor, and that as a people we do not sufficiently estimate this kind of toil. The effect of this unjust standard of respectability is that our young men seek to evade certain kinds of necessary labor and certain pursuits, not so much from an aversion to the toil they bring, but from a want of that courage that would dare the injustice and the frowns of such as look down upon this kind of labor with a false feeling of contempt, as if it were dishonorable in a young man to do any work necessary to the good of society, or to follow in the footsteps of the blessed Christ, who for thirty years worked as a common carpenter in the village of Nazareth. It is this undervaluation of necessary occupations in this country that causes so many young men to avoid them and to seek to get a living in ways ignoble and of questionable honesty, rather than by hard, honest hand-labor. When

public opinion pronounces this kind of toil to be wanting in respectability, young men are frightened from it, and are driven into speculations of doubtful propriety, or to the gaming-table, or to professions for which they have no qualifications; and the consequence is that multitudes of them are either without employment or engaged in pursuits to which they are not adapted, and which, even if they were, are not half so intrinsically creditable as is the calling of the carpenter, the goldsmith, or the man who smites the anvil. The consequence of this prevailing opinion is an aversion to industrious labor and a general rush into those schemes which acquire wealth without earning it, and which are not equal in respectability to the calling that seeks it by the honest sweat of the face.

No business, no pursuit, no profession that does not produce something can claim to be a positive social good, and hence every pursuit or calling that aims to acquire wealth without giving to society its equivalent is founded on the principle of social dishonesty. Society may, and often does, tolerate them; those who practice them may, and sometimes do, get offended when the pulpit rebukes them; yet while God gives me power to speak, I will stand up in my place and denounce them as unjust, unfair, and as dishonest; for no matter who engages in them or countenances them, they are these and nothing else. Understand me now, I do not mean by this that trade, or an exchange of one thing for another, is dishonest. There is, as I believe, a legitimate business of mediation and interchange be-

tween producers and consumers, and a legitimate service accruing to both by virtue of it. This is the basis and the advantage of trade and commerce, and neither has in itself nor does it necessarily lead to dishonesty; but farther than this, I contend that whoever by speculation acquires wealth without paying some equivalent, gets something for nothing; and this, I hold, is dishonesty. The man who gains his wealth in some necessary and honest occupation, no matter how humble it may be, is far more entitled to respectability than is the man who, too proud to work with his hands, seeks to acquire wealth without honestly earning it.

Now then, if what has been said as to the social necessity there is for a variety of pursuits be true, and if you have selected your calling and have entered upon its duties, the lesson which of all others it is most important for you to learn is that of contentment and diligence. It is a common thing for men to complain at what they call their lot in life—to think that some other lot or calling would suit them better, would be better adapted to them, and give promise of larger success. Sometimes they go so far as to call in question the providence that has appointed them to their positions, and to fly from them. They have not learned, like the apostle, to accept their allotments with thankfulness; to enter upon them with resignation, with a feeling of respect for them, and with the determination to be successful in them. They forget that the great springs from which the soul is fed have their source not in our vocations, nor in our surroundings, but in God and in

ourselves; and that if in the order of his providence it is theirs to toil in low places, as the world has it, he can make their happiness as great as though the world's eye was on them. They forget that the variety of work to be done calls for a corresponding variety of workers, and that the great object of the laborer should be to accept his place and do his work faithfully. His business is to fall into his place, to perform its duties, and to look to the great Overseer for his reward.

Now then, if your pursuit in life be a necessary one, and you follow it faithfully, you have a right to expect that it will honor you; and so it will in the eye of God and of all good men. In the dispensation of his rewards there is no difference between the king and those who smite the anvil. What he looks for is fidelity to trust, and wherever this is found, waving above it will be seen his crown of recompense, ready and waiting to be given to merit and worth, whether upon the throne or in the workshop.

In the name of justice and of human progress, I protest against our social habit of stigmatizing work of the hand and the vocations that call for it as disreputable. I have not the least particle of sympathy with that pretentious aristocracy which makes the hard hand of necessary and honest toil a badge of shame, as though it were a crime to earn bread by the sweat of the face, which is God's law; and yet there are many among us who so esteem it, to their shame be it spoken. If these persons are before me to-night, I will address them now especi-

ally. You admit that certain trades in which hard work must be done are necessary; and when pressed to the wall, you admit that intrinsically they are honorable. In addition, you see men and women filling them who have intelligence and virtue and moral worth. You admit that they acquit themselves as nobly in their vocations as the banker, or merchant, or senator does in his. All this you are compelled to admit; and yet, for no other reason than that the laborer wields the hammer, or drives the plane, or draws the needle, he or she is held to be unworthy of an *entrée* into fashionable society. The hard-working mechanic, with all his claims for admission on the score of fidelity to his calling and general intelligence, is kept out, while the man who represents money, however bankrupt in virtue, or imbecile in mind, is not only welcomed, but favoringly sought after by the speculating fathers and maneuvering mothers of society. I know, and you know too, my friends, that our social verdict as to worth is often made up in this section by the accidents of birth and fortune and wealth, and that we even permit costume itself to determine our estimate of men and women. We have become alarmingly dependent on tailors and milliners and mantua-makers, and the venders of cosmetics, as legitimate means of graduating this worth, and are by almost universal suffrage offering premiums to dandies and loafers, to Lilliputian bonnets and Brobdingnaggian waterfalls. Why, it has come to be worth a young man's hopes of a respectable position in society for him to betake himself to hard,

laborious hand-work in some necessary and honorable occupation. To do this is to be excluded from the so-called first circles of society, while the professional loafer, the jeweled idler, the perfumed exquisite, who dresses at the expense of his tailor, and whose claims to gentility are based simply and alone on his exemption from labor—his fashionable garb, his soft hand, which compared to his head would be granite—while this abortion of humanity is allowed his season-ticket into the temple of our sham-life of fashion.

I am no advocate for unconditional social equality. I do not plead for that dead-level agrarianism in which virtue and vice, knowledge and ignorance, refinement and vulgarity, are made equal. I believe in social distinctions, and in their universal recognition, but I would have them founded on moral and intellectual excellence instead of upon mere adventitious differences. What I insist upon is that in judging of men and women we should rise above mere artificial considerations. The legitimate questions to ask in determining a man's claims to respectability are, Has he an occupation? Is it a needed occupation? and, Does he faithfully and intelligently discharge its duties? If his life can give an affirmative answer to these questions, I am bound to esteem him as a worthy member of society, and as a hero in the great battle of humanity. Such a man, however humble his calling, stands enrolled with God's heroes; with the men who are filling the places assigned them by the great Task-master; with the men who are there by

Divine appointment, there to do their duty, there to toil, to work, to bear humanity onward; there to labor while God, the great Producer, gives his blessing upon their labors. These, I contend, are God's heroes, and you may see them everywhere. You will find them in the fields of science, calculating with Kepler, Newton, and Laplace. You will find them in laboratories and in farm-fields, at the desk of the merchant, in the offices of exchange, on the tripod of the press, at the anvil, by the carpenter's bench, in the sick-room, the pulpit, and at the bar; and sometimes you will find their worthiest exemplifications in the shop of the pale seamstress, and around the midnight taper burning dimly where the poor widow, with bent frame and wan features, is wearing out her life in efforts to give food and raiment and knowledge to her fatherless children.

O it is not in palaces of splendor nor in halls of pleasure, where fashion flashes her jewels and wealth displays her gauds, where the sound of music and revelry float out upon the dallying winds—not there is it you will find the world's working heroes; but in the high places of earnest thought, and oftener still in the low places of obscurity, where the lowly toil and suffer and strive for the final victory under the open eye of God; there, there they are to be found; and these, when the flattered idler, the poor mechanized automaton of fashion, and the despicable drone, shall look back and shudder at their valueless lives, at their miserably caricatured existences—these then, though they lived in hunger and died in want and under

social ban, will find their sweetest, noblest rapture—that of remembered usefulness.

If, then, you are among these great and necessary workers, put away that disposition to complain, so common to men and yet so unworthy of them and their work. No matter where you work so the work is needed; no matter whether your calling be that of the carpenter, the goldsmith, or at the forge, or over the anvil, in the court-room, or by the sick-bed, or in the pulpit with the apostle—no matter where it is or what it is, I say murmur not, but work. O needed worker, what reason hast thou to beg for sympathy? to sink discouraged by the way-side of toil? to act the part of a whining mendicant because society bars you from the pomp and parade, the shows and sins of fashion? Thou art nobler there in thy honest, sturdy toils for thyself, thy children, and for human progress, than those whom thou enviest; and so, instead of indulging in unworthy discontent, go forward through duty to reward. Remember that all noble life is of necessity a contest, and instead of complaining harness yourself and plunge into the glorious strife. Go into it remembering that first comes the battle and then the victory; and that each engagement from which you come victorious lessens the number yet to be fought, and makes greener the laurel with which you will at last be crowned. What you need is the sublime purpose of going forward in the face of every discouragement, the determination that no matter what your pursuit is, so it is a necessary one you will so wed yourself to it and so discharge

its duties as to compel the world to respect both you and your calling. I am persuaded that if the working-men of the country would determine to unite high culture and intelligence with the noble callings they have chosen, it would not be long until every worthy man among them would win his way to the highest round in the ladder of social position. The fact is, no man with "heart within and God o'erhead," with will and energy and virtue, can be kept down in this country. Only bring these great factors into the arena of strife, and you need fear no opposition. Put these great forces to work, and you can recover what some of you may have lost; may trample down difficulties which blunders in the past may have planted in your path. That past may be strewn with the wrecks of improvidence and dissipation, and the biting curs of society may say that you never can redeem it, that the mountain is too ponderous for you to remove it; yet in the name of the great God who loves the right and who will crown it with victory, I tell you to-night that by will, by purpose, by unfaltering energy you can hurl it from your path and stand at last with the victor's palm in your hand and the conqueror's shout upon your lips.

Look at the thousands who have gone up from places of toil to the highest places of eminence and power, and determine that what others have done you too can and will do. Look up, I say, and let their example inspire you with confidence. No towering crag half-way to heaven was their starting place. They started from poverty and amid toil. It was

in humble places, in places of obscurity, in callings that abounded with hard hand-work; it was there they fledged pinions that have borne them to the sun. O let the lofty psalmody rolling out from the great deeds of such as these make you believing and persevering, and determined upon success. That, young gentlemen, is what you need—high purpose and sublime, unfaltering determination that God helping you the world shall feel your power, and feel it for good. You need a grand resolution like that by which the noble Ingomar was upheld, when exalted by love into a demigod he exclaimed:

I could lift the world
From off its solid center, drink the ocean
Dry, and then tear down the stars of heaven;
All that is possible—ay, or impossible—
I'll do for bliss like this!

O that I could inspire you with faith in your success; with purpose and will and determination to succeed! O that I could send a summons to my young countrymen everywhere that would turn their workshops, their farm-houses, their counting-rooms and offices, into places of study during their hours of leisure! O that I could burn into your souls who hear me to-night an undying purpose to make men of yourselves!—a determination to win and wear the crown of usefulness! to conquer all difficulties, and to enter the temple of immortality! What are the difficulties from which you shrink back dismayed and cowering? What are they but phantoms which a noble ambition may put to flight? O think of your endowments of thought, of reason,

of intelligence, and of will—of the conquering might which these give to the soul; and then resolve that as others fought and conquered you too will fight and conquer, and prove yourselves worthy to stand near the great white throne and among the band of heroes who in dust and toil, who amid defamation and wrong, and some of them at the cost of life itself, learned the pass-word to the skies. There they stand to-night with the valiant of God's kingdom, and at his right-hand. They trod the earth in toil, yet with stately steps, champions for God and martyrs to truth; and rolling centuries have not extinguished the light left burning in their footsteps. "Onward they passed," as Longfellow has said of others, "like those hoary elders seen in the sublime vision of an earthly paradise, attendant angels bearing golden lamps before them, while above and behind the air teemed with colors as from the trail of pencils."

O weary workers, if such be here to-night; O toilers in humble places, beside the couch of pain, watching all through the night and until your faces grow wan and pale as the morning light comes through the parted blinds to find you still at work; O tired ones, who toil and see no fruit, who watch and fight and pray, and yet seem far from the victory—who keep working, working, forever working, and yet are forever poor; and ye who go on night after night sewing and stitching until long after the midnight chime rings out upon the still air, but whose hard labors bring but a scant supply of food and clothing to your little babes; O

workers, O brothers and sisters in this fellowship of toil, the time of rest is coming! In heaven—yes, in heaven—we shall find time to rest, and there we may all rest, and rest forever.

No sickness there,
No weary wasting of the frame away,
No dread of summer's bright and fervid ray.

No hidden grief,
No wild and cheerless vision of despair,
No vain petition for a swift relief,
No tearful eyes, no broken hearts are there.

Care has no home
Within that realm of ceaseless prayer and song;
Its tossing billows break and melt in foam
Far from the mansions of the spirit-throng

The storm's black wing
Is never spread athwart celestial skies,
Its wailings blend not with the voice of spring
As some too tender floweret fades and dies.

No parted friends
O'er mournful recollections have to weep,
No bed of death enduring love attends,
To watch the coming of a pulseless sleep.

Let us depart,
If home like this awaits the weary soul!
Look up, then, stricken one!—thy wounded heart
Shall bleed no more, nor tears of sorrow roll.

With faith our guide,
White-robed and innocent, to tread the way,
Why fear to plunge in Jordan's rolling tide,
And find the haven of eternal day?

The Greatness and Value of Man.

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.” Psalm viii. 3-6.

WHILE the speculative systems of unbelief have differed widely in some respects, they have been generally found united in their undervaluation of human nature. Man, they hold, is but an atom in a universe of unsummed, untraveled magnitude—an *ephemeron* amid the uncreated ages—a mist lost in the surrounding masses, and therefore beneath the notice of Him who created the heavens and the earth. They stand out beneath the heavens with their suns and moons and stars, those magnificent structures which the Almighty Architect has built, and as they contemplate their number, their magnitude, and their glory, in contrast with man—the atom, the *ephemeron*, and the unit—they persuade themselves that for him to claim that the Almighty Builder and Sovereign of all this material grandeur can be concerned about so insignificant a creature

as man is the very height of presumptuous conceit.

Now, the material philosophy that pronounces this verdict bases it on a material estimate of man, which way of estimating him is as opposed to reason as it is against revelation. Reason cannot be just to herself and measure man by the mere materiality of his being. To be true to herself she must take his dimensions as a rational, intelligent, immortal being, and award him position and value not as so many pounds of curiously wrought and wonderfully combined matter, but as the nearest intellectual and moral imitation of the Creator to be found in all the works of God. This is the view presented of him in revelation. The Word of God in this and other things stands in illustrious and cheering contrast to the chilling speculations of infidel philosophy.

The psalmist seems at first to have been baffled in his estimate of man when he looked at him in his physical constitution and in contrast with the amplitude and magnificence of the material creation: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" But when he turns from this material view, his conceptions enlarge, and we find him in the transition of a single sentence contemplating him as something exalted, glorious, and almost angelic: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou

madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." In this outburst he is assigned the first place in the scale of creation, is represented as occupying a grade in the Divine regard only less than the angels themselves, and as having in fact been appointed to a dominion in this world corresponding to the dominion which the Sovereign God maintains over all worlds. Now, if this be his exalted position in the order of creation, it furnishes an overwhelming answer to that unbelief that would exclude him from God's watchful care on the ground of his alleged insignificance, and shows why the Almighty should be momentarily mindful of him, which is the great thought so necessary to our comfort in this changing life.

Let us now, in the spirit of devout supplication for light upon this precious truth of revelation, pass in solemn review before us man's wonderful constitution and his high rank in the scale of creation, and see if these do not, even in the estimation of reason, entitle him to the watchful care of the Sovereign God.

And first now, as to his constitution, What is man? This constitution is complex, made up of body and mind and soul. Look at his body, and see how fearfully and wonderfully he is made. Behold how part answers to part, how each is adapted to the other, how admirably the whole is adjusted to the indwelling soul and for the relations of that soul to the external universe. Ascend from the body to the mind, the affections, and the

will, and the wonder of his complex organization increases. He alone of all the animate creation has the power of thought, of reason, of understanding. By his intellectual endowments he can trace the relations of things; can follow effects back to causes; can calculate with some degree of precision the future by *data* gathered from the past; can classify and distribute a world and even a universe of objects and events; can reproduce in his own mind parts of the great plan of the Infinite Mind itself; can ascend the pyramid of creation, whose head towers away into the invisible, and behold there the Creator enthroned on the summit. He alone, of all the life with which the visible universe teems, is capable of surveying the whole with thought and reflection, of ascribing it to one great First Cause. To him only belongs that faculty by which all that occurs leaves an ineffaceable image on the mind, by which all the experiences of life and the events of Providence leave their imprint on the tablet of the heart, and by which at every step through life the soul is being filled with recollections and impressions that will abide with it forever and become subjects for remorse or for gratitude throughout eternity. To him alone has been given the power of imagination—that power which enables him without quitting the globe he inhabits to pass the outermost limits of creation, to press into the invisible worlds, to enter with unsandaled feet the “heaven of heavens,” and lose himself in the splendors that break from the eternal throne. He is the only being susceptible of emotions of pity,

compassion, benevolence, and that grandest of all capabilities, the power to love. His capacity in this respect verges on the infinite; for after you have supplied it with all that this world can offer for its gratification, he still sighs for more, for an excellence that is infinite. After taking all created excellence to his heart and lavishing his affections on it, he still has affection to spare—still has capacities unoccupied, still has boundless love unemployed; and the loftiest height of created excellence only furnishes him with a point from which to soar away in quest of Him who challenges all the love of which he is capable. He is the only being too that can be influenced by motives, and that has the faculty of will. While his appetites stoop to gather up their objects from the dust, a sense of duty and the sovereign power of will can bear him away in homage to the throne of the invisible.

Although he is a child of earth, the same motive can impel him to action which at the same moment is impelling an archangel as he speeds his way on some high and heavenly mission. As a creature capable of moral government, he is made not only to find happiness in obeying the very laws to which God himself conforms, but is capable of sympathy with the divine character, of reflecting the divine excellence, and of even aspiring to live for the very same end as that for which God himself lives and reigns—the manifestation of the divine glory.

These are some of his endowments; and when

you reflect that these are all stamped with immortality, you cannot help feeling that this being, so royally dowered and so deathless, must be more to the Creator than a whole universe of unthinking, unchoosing, and unloving matter. That universe knows not its origin; has no power to calculate its dimensions; is without thought, feeling, and affection. Man has all these, and is therefore greater than the universe. The sun, high fixed as it is on its throne of fire; the moon and stars, receiving and scattering abroad as they do the splendors of the bright day god, whose radiance kindles upon them the unutterable glory of the night—these august witnesses to the majesty of the Creator see not their own light, feel not their own heat, do not know even of their own existence. These all too are to pass away, leaving the vast fields of immensity vacant or filled with wrecks of matter and fragments of demolished worlds; yet when these are gone man will only have entered upon the infancy of an existence which is to run parallel with the existence of God. This of itself places him high above all material grandeur and amplitude and value; high above God's sweeping sky, with its moon and stars; high above a universe of central suns and far-reaching systems of dumb, unintelligent matter.

O if but one of the human race had been endowed with this immortality, that one would have outmeasured in dignity and worth the heavens and the earth; that one would have been the wonder and admiration of angels, and would have en-

listed more of God's love and care than the whole material universe. If but one had been thus dowered by the Father, and all others of our race had been doomed to annihilation, how the ages would have crowded to that one with their homage! how would all earthly crowns be eclipsed and all earthly distinctions forgotten in his presence! And yet this inheritance of immortality belongs to all; and more than this, all have this immortality with constant progression in excellence and happiness—the mind ever augmenting its stores of happiness and enlarging only to augment them more; ever ascending the loftiest throne it can behold, only to see others loftier still rising before it and inviting it onward; and this throughout an infinity of duration which will be to the good an eternity of enjoyment.

Is it a matter of astonishment now that a being so wonderfully endowed should be esteemed as next to the angels, and that to him should have been committed a sovereignty over nature? Do you wonder now that the psalmist should say, while contemplating him in these respects, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet?"

So far now I have spoken of man's physical, intellectual, and moral constitution, and of the claims which these constituents of his being present for the Divine regard. I propose now to take another step, and to call your attention to the most valuable element in his wonderful constitution, which is his spirituality, or the capability he has as a spirit of

being permeated and inspired by the Almighty Spirit; and this, I think, is his highest distinction in the scale of intelligence, and makes him more akin to God and of more worth in God's esteem than all else. What he can do and what he does do by virtue of his intelligence shows that he is like God; but his permeableness, or inspirableness, shows a capacity for receiving God which is greater than Godlikeness. The one demonstrates his greatness, the other his divineness. By the one he creates and uses language; makes record of the past; enacts laws; builds institutions; climbs the heavens—searches out their times and their orbits; bridges the sea by his inventions; commands the lightnings to think his thoughts, and do his errands to the ends of the world. By the other he is penetrated and lighted up from within by the mind of God; has an understanding of things unseen by the inspiration of the Almighty; in a word, is a spirit, having an inward consciousness of God, and is a being irradiated and filled with the divine fullness.

Strictly speaking, this inspirableness is a distinct element from what has been called man's moral nature, and is higher than the moral, just as the moral is higher than the animal. I want, if I can, to lead you to apprehend this distinction. To be a moral being is to have a sense of duty and a power of choice which support and justify responsibility. It is that in us which recognizes the supremacy of moral ideas, or abstract notions, and acknowledges their binding force as laws or principles. Animals, for

example, have a certain power of intelligence, but they have no sense of duty or law, and are therefore irresponsible. They have no moral nature. Now, if you advance man from an animal to a moral being, and yet deny to him the spiritual element of his constitution, you leave him just as far separated from God as is the animal. And even where he has this spiritual element, but refuses to acknowledge and exercise, it he is only an animal with a moral nature which is wholly destitute of God. An atheist, for example, can have moral ideas, and acting on the plane of the world as a member of society he can feel and can personally honor the obligations of society, and yet be as empty of God as the stone in your streets. But to be a spirit, a God-receiving spirit, is to be practically related to a God in us. It is to be capable not only of duty, or of sentiments of duty, but of actually receiving God, of actually knowing him, and of being actually permeated, filled, ennobled, and glorified by his infinite Spirit. It is right here that humanity culminates and unveils the summit on which floats the flag of its highest possible dignity. It is in the fact that man by his high constitution is a spirit, a being open to the visitation and indwelling power of God. In this sense he is equal to the angels themselves, for even angelic nature cannot go higher than this. Not even the crowned archangels can excel in order a soul so configured to God as to be inspirable by him, able to receive his impulse, able to fall into his movement, able to rest in his ends, and to be finally perfected in the eternity of his

joys. Now, to what a height of almost divinity does this view of man elevate him! Who does not tremble in awe of himself at the thought that in accordance with his spiritual constitution the Eternal Spirit of God is continually coursing through the secret cells and chambers of his feeling, turning him about in his motions and calling back his wild affections to a common center with his own?

This inspirableness, my brethren, is the prepared groundwork for man's regeneration, for his sanctification, and for his final glorification in heaven. For him to be born of the Spirit is simply for him to know God as revealed in his inmost life by a knowledge that is immediate. This is the real significance of regeneration. It is not that a man is set in a new relation to abstract laws and tests and obligations; but it is that he is brought back into his true normal relation to the Eternal Spirit of God, and begins to live as he was intended to live—an inspired life: a life led by the Spirit, dwelt in by the Spirit, permeated, filled, and sanctified by the Spirit. A man thus inspired of God awakes to a consciousness of his sovereignty over all things around him; and more than all, he is sovereign over himself through the might of the indwelling Spirit. He governs himself the more sublimely and, as it were, imperially because he feels that he is crowned as a king by the inspiration he feels. He subdues the body, tramples down pain and scorn, rides over death, and plants himself as a conqueror side by side with his Master. O brethren, here, right here in this spiritual element of our

constitution, is our greatest value in the sight of God, as well as the grandest possibilities of our nature. It consists in the fact that we are the only part in God's order of creation that can receive him in this sense of inspiration. Nature may be above us in magnitude, but not in a receptivity for God. The stars may outshine us, the mountains may be grander and the ocean sublimer as vast materialities, but they are not spirit, and are therefore not inspirable. God, by his omnipotence, may act upon them. He can penetrate all central fires and dissolve or annihilate every most secret atom of the worlds, he can plant his forge in chaos and mold planets and crowd immensity with suns and systems, but he cannot inspire them. Nothing created can receive him in this respect unless it is constitutionally related to him in terms that permit correspondence. To receive him there must be intelligence offered to his intelligence, sentiments to his sentiments, reason to his reason, will to his will—in a word, there must be spirit opening to his Spirit; and these great elements of spirituality belong only to man. They separate him from and set him above all other creatures, and show him to be scarcely less different from them than God is himself. When I compare him, then, in this respect to the moon and stars which God has ordained, they all pale into insignificance before him as a spirit capable of receiving God. The obedient worlds of heaven have no such power. They can follow the Divine will, and fill immensity with their stupendous frame of order, yet they have nothing in their

substance correspondent with God as a Spirit, and cannot do what the humblest soul on earth can do, receive a direct and conscious communication of God. They may be shaken, melted, exploded, and even be annihilated by his will, but they are neither vast enough in size nor high enough in quality to gather into their bosoms his inspiration.

Look back at the history of your race, and behold how in different ages this inspirable element in men has flamed out in characters called of God to show it forth in its largest manifestations. Behold it in an Enoch, whose affinities were so changed by it that the earth could hold him down no longer; in an Elijah, whose chariot was borne by it to heaven as hurrying winds drive the cloud before them; in a Moses, as he comes from Horeb, the liberator, leader, and lawgiver of Israel; in a Peter, a Paul, a John, a Luther, a Wesley, and thousands more, who, under this inspiration, went forth to conquer the world to Christ. These grand, God-partaking natures have stood out in every age as representatives of the inspirableness of human nature. History represents them as responding from height to height to one another as the centuries swept on, as bonfires, carrying this great truth onward from range to range throughout the ages. They are as watch-fires flaming along the past, telling of the possibilities of our nature, and there they will continue to burn while the sunset lingers and until the sunrise breaks. They tell us how great man is. They tell you how great you may become—that it is possible for the humblest of you to be filled

with the sublime personality of God, and forever exalted by his inspirations; forever moving in the divine movement, forever rested on the divine center, and forever blessed in the divine beatitude.

O what is the world's madness and misery, its revenges and hates and cruelties, its crazed religions, its bloody wars, its enkindled passions; its wild, frenzied race for happiness, its longings and aspirations and disappointments, its cries of agony and wails of despair—what is all this mixture of the angel and the demon as seen in the history of our race, and as felt in some of your bosoms, but the retributions which this inspirable element takes on those that permit it, showing that mistreat it as men may it still lives, and will assert its defrauded rights and strive to reclaim its lost glories? And then think of the hell which its neglect or misuse kindles—the hell disclosed in the gospel, the hell whose supreme of misery will be that God is absent. That hell is represented as “outer darkness,” because it is that night of the mind which overtakes the soul when it strays from God and his light; think, I say, that if the very perfection of misery and the fiercest agony of hell are to come to the soul simply because of its severance from God, how great must be the soul's capacity for God, and how near akin this makes us to God! O to be eternally severed from his inspirations is enough, as we are constituted, to complete our wretchedness! No matter whether that severance extinguish our capacity of inspiration or leave it gasping, so to speak, after the inspiring breath of God forever

shut away—no matter, I say, which, the severance itself will be the perfection of misery. The one would be the misery of deformity and weakness, the other of exile and want. The one would be that of a soul so halved in its capacity as to leave the other half unregulated and torn by disorders which it has no higher nature left to subordinate and quell; the other would be that of a soul in full capacity torn by disorders, hopeless of all good, and yet struggling with immortal want beside.

O that I could make you see in all this not only an argument for man's greatness, but what would be still better, a motive for you to struggle to be good! O that you would recognize in these elements of your grand nature not only a reason why God should care for you—should care for you more than he cares for the material universe—but a reason, a commanding reason, why you should return his unremitting providence over you with a service born in gratitude and made willing and obedient by love!

You came from his hand not only with the richest endowments of mind, but constituted so as to be divinely inhabited. It is the highest glory of your being that you were made to live in eternal inspiration, for you are a spirit, and have been put in correspondence with God. He has "crowned you with glory and honor," and given you a certain power of sovereignty. You have only to open your whole nature to him, to offer yourselves to him in the spirit of contrition and of real, unquestioning faith, and the light will not more certainly break

into the sky and fill the horizon with day when the morning sun rises than he will flood your soul with peace and joy and love.

O that I could lead you to understand how great a being you are, and how great a height those have attained to who are established everlastingly in the inspired state! It has made them kings and priests unto God. They have become the kinsmen of angels, the companions of seraphim—bright and strong and free, because the Eternal Spirit leads them and shines forever in glorious evidence through them. They are princes now at God's right-hand. There they walk, in their greatness and might and majesty, in the range of divinity. O you cannot but see, as you contemplate them in their glorious beauty and in the royal confidence of their eternity, how much it signifies that they were endowed with a spirit capable of God and of the abiding grace of his presence. As you behold them there in the glory of their resurrection, visibly perfected and ennobled by the divine inhabitation, surrounded with holy myriads and gloriously transfigured by the light of God falling upon them from his radiant throne—as you see them there, rejoicing in a knowledge and bathed in a holiness and basking in a love only less than the knowledge and holiness and love of the Father himself, learn what a distinction it is that you are a man and not a world. Go forward to the age when the heavens shall be no more, when the universe will be in ruins; when the last orb that wheels in yon blazing sky will have been laid away in the charnel-house

of departed worlds, and as you behold man surviving all and admitted either to an eternal partnership with God or to an everlasting fellowship with devils, learn your value, and determine to live worthy of it.

The Philosophy of Life.

“So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Psalm xc. 12.

THESE annual reunions, on occasions of academic celebration, are not without a deep significance, my friends. They tell us that the cause of education has an earnest lodgment in the hearts of the people, that a profound interest is being felt for the youth of our country, and that parents and guardians are eager to witness the results of the months of toil that precede these annual holidays. Their presence on these occasions not only gives encouragement to the young but gladness and freshness to their own world-weary spirits. We, who are older, in this way rekindle the wasting fires of our own youth-time. We revive the hopes that stirred our bosoms when, long years ago, we too stood on the margin of life's battle-field and yearned to go forth into the contest.

As the traveler in the fierce noon-time of a summer day recalls some sunny slope in the tangled wildwood through which he passed in the cool, bright morning, so do we amid these glad surroundings remember the days when we were young—a memory all the more beautiful too when

contrasted with the stern duties, the hand-to-hand conflicts with care and anxiety, in which we have since had to engage.

Who of us here to-day that takes in these smiling faces, these unclouded brows, these beaming eyes, these innocent bosoms which, like the undulations of the sea, are glowing with warm, impassioned hopes of the future—who of us that witnesses a spectacle like this but lives over a similar hour in his own history, and recalls with a sigh, and perhaps a tear, the bright visions which then beckoned him on? What though these may have proved an illusion, a dream long since perished, a bubble that has parted in the wave of later years? They were beautiful to us then, and their very memory is beautiful now; for they were born at a period when the canker was not in our hearts, nor the earth-stain on our wings. The hot desert sun had not then glared down on our heads, nor had the mountain crags bled our feet to soreness. We had not then learned that lesson so bitter to the young, the lesson of doubt and distrust. We were better then than now, for the journey was all before us, and we were loving and trustful, hopeful and happy. That period, my friends, is gone; yet we cannot efface its beauty nor bury its memories. They rise before some of you on this bright summer morning, and for the moment seem real. Ah, happy for us if we could stay their flight and live forever young and confiding! But as this cannot be, let us, now that we are here to look upon our children, consecrate the hour to their instruction and profit.

We desire, my young friends, to offer you some thoughts which if earnestly pondered may make you wiser and better and happier; some counsel which, while it may not mar the brightness of your commencement festivities, will, if thoughtfully received, aid you in placing a proper value on time, a high estimate on life—counsel which we trust will give you a deeper insight into its nature, a loftier conception of its aims, of their grandeur and nobleness, and that will constrain you to go from this temple with the prayer of the psalmist abiding in your hearts and consecrating your lips: “So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

The great secret of human happiness, my friends, is to live right; and to do this we must understand the nature of life—not merely our physical existence, but our mental and moral being, comprehending the powers with which we have been endowed, our responsibility to Him who has thus nobly endowed us, our manifold relations to Him and to our race, the duties we owe to Him and them, and the best means of preparation for meeting these responsibilities and performing these duties. Now, in order to bring these several points clearly before you, we would have you feel in the outset that life is a solemn reality. It is a stupendous fact that you exist, that you—a being that can feel and think, that can love and reason, can remember and forecast, can plan and calculate, can choose and refuse, can do or not do, according to the decisions of a self-determining principle within you—are here, here by

the ordination of God, here surrounded by manifold evidences that there is a great purpose too in your wonderful being. It is a fact too that comes home to you in all the attractions of mystery, for your entrance upon this fearful being was one of mystery; your stay here is amid manifold mysteries, and when you go hence, as all must, it will be by a path over which there will hang a cloud of deep and dark and inscrutable mystery. Of the life beyond that valley we may not now speak, as it is with existence here, as preparatory to what is beyond, that we are now concerned. Another view of life is that you exist here as a person. As such you have an individual responsibility, a personal part to perform which none other in all the universe can do but yourself—a work which will come back to you in the life beyond in blessings or curses, just as you may do good or evil in the life that now is. All of us are disposed to merge our individuality in the multitude, to sink the person in the mass, to undervalue ourselves as to the duties required, and by connecting ourselves with others fence off the feeling of personal responsibility so necessary as a *stimulus* to the performance of duty. We are prone to say, as we look around and see how much ought to be done by somebody, "Others are more competent—their circumstances are more favorable to doing than ours;" and we often wonder why they are not more active, persuading ourselves that could we occupy their places our course would be quite different from theirs. In all this we are forgetting the personality of our being, are hiding ourselves

away in the great hive of humanity, waiting for others to do what should be occupying our own time and engrossing our energies. Therefore remember that in one sense you are living alone; that God has given you a distinct personality, with responsibilities that pertain to you as an individual; that no matter how many others live, they do not absolve you from these individual responsibilities; that in this sense you are to be the architect of your own fortunes—individual builders on these walls of time; and that when the Master-builder comes to inspect the work, each workman must stand condemned or approved according to the evil or good which he may have done.

Life is associational as well as personal. By this we mean that every individual life is linked with all other lives, and that the present has inseparable connection with the past and future. As each hour of the day maintains a relation with the hours that go before and the hours that come after it, so does each individual life bear a necessary relation both to the lives that have been and the lives that are to be. Therefore existence is segregate and aggregate, individual and social. The life that we are now living is not only your life and my life, and the life of all living, but it belongs by association to all who have lived and to all who may yet live, being but an integral of the great life-circle whereof all have part. What incalculable worth does this thought give to the present, for each segregate portion of the great aggregate, however minute that portion is, has an

importance in proportion to its relation to the whole, and cannot be foolishly squandered without guilt. Each of these minute portions of time involves consequences connected mediately or immediately with all foregone ages and with the cycles yet to follow, and is to continue its effects through an infinitely progressive being. Then, while it is true that what you do is a personal work, for which you are personally responsible, it is no less true that it is associated by great connectional laws with all your race and with the silent eternities both of the past and future. But the idea that we would present with prominence in connection with this associational phase of life is that it connects you in the present with every living man and woman on the globe and lays on you an obligation to labor for their good. To this labor you are bound by the constitution of your life, by your mutual dependence one on another, and by all your hopes for the progress and salvation of your race. This great lesson the world, even the Christian world, has not yet learned. On every hand we see men living for self, for personal aggrandizement, when by this law of their being, as enacted by God, they should be living for others. We see them, in neglect of this, living in states of social, religious, and national disintegration. They have their own families, their own religious sects, their own form of government. They seem to say, "What to us are other families, other communions, and other forms of government?"

No life, my friends, was ever grand that did not

go out of itself. The grandest life ever recorded—that of Jesus—was one of the completest self-forgetfulness and of the amplest benevolence. It is true he lived as a human—having sensation, conflict, and temptation just as we all have, and having to submit to struggle and discipline as all must—yet how majestically he moved among men, exemplifying every day of his life that self-abnegation that must enter into every noble life! None were too poor for him to mingle with, none so obscure as to be beyond his help, none fallen so low as to have no claim on his compassion. Wherever there was poverty or sin or suffering, thither he turned his footsteps, and there would he abide until his hand had healed the sickness and his words comforted the sufferer. His was a model life—a life of sacrifice, of devotion to others, of well-doing—a life the grandeur of which has been speaking for nearly two thousand years. Then, go out from yourselves and toil for others, if you would be like your great Exemplar. Like him, be a benefaction to your race. Be at work, always at work, for God and humanity. Be instructed by these lessons which all nature is ever teaching—lessons of sympathy, of kindness, and of love. Let the lily on the mountain-side, and the rose hanging on its frail stem in your garden-walk—there to add to your happiness—teach you! Let the mountain and the oak, the deep sea and the silent stars, the laughing rill and the marching world, let nature with all her ten thousand harmonies, sing to you the psalm of duty; and as you read written on earth and sky

that "nothing has a right to live to itself," go forth to duty and toil—expecting your reward not here, but there.

Having offered these desultory thoughts on the nature of life, we proceed, in the second place, to inquire into some of the ends contemplated in its bestowal. We are too prone to regard life not so much according to its nature and the purposes for which it was given as our satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it. When it goes on without interruption; when the face of fortune beams smilingly upon us, and our business prospers; when hope ripens daily into fruition, and the circle of our joys is unbroken; when our homes escape sickness, and the dear ones there wear smiles of peace and contentment—then we find it easy to call life good; then we are happy, and can say, "How beautiful is life!"

But now, let us change the picture. Let the sunshine depart and the dun clouds begin to lower; let disappointment in business overtake us; let domestic troubles gather darkly around us; let sickness come to our dwellings; let death sit down by our firesides, laying low the arm of the husband, stilling the heart of the wife, or sealing the eyes of our little lambs—ah! let the grave close over objects like these, hiding from us the faces we had long loved to gaze upon and hushing into silence lips which through life had opened only to bless us—let us, when we have laid these away in their graves, return to our desolate homes to behold there their images rising up with the sight of the garments

they wore, the seats they once occupied, the music of songs they sung, and of words they were accustomed to utter; let the picture be thus changed, and how different our views of life, and how the poor orphaned, broken spirit longs to wander away and rest in the bosom of God!

Now, is this because life of itself is evil? No, no, my friends; for checkered as it sometimes is, and fraught with heart-aches, as may be our journey here, life is sacred—for it is the gift of our Father in heaven, and is designed for our ultimate good. It is a school in which we are to be trained for a nobler existence. Now, in this earthly school the modes by which the mind and heart are to receive their training, by which the former is to be illuminated and made reverent, believing, and adoring, and by which the latter is to be cleansed from evil and purified from passion, and exalted to communion with the Father and fellowship with his Son—these modes, we say, are various, and unless we understand well the end of all these blended joys and sorrows, the end of these duties and struggles, we will often weep when we ought to smile, and will sometimes despair when we have good reason to hope on in comforting assurance of a brighter dawn to-morrow. Then, we invoke your attention, and especially the young, while we speak of some of the purposes for which life is given.

To speak generically, life has been given for purposes of discipline, and is to be made up of intense struggles, earnest endeavors, and severe contests. In this discipline there are employed two distinct

instrumentalities which we would have you all understand and remember. The first is made up of the circumstances thrown around us in early life, such as our parentage, our associations, the schools we are sent to, the churches we attend, the books we read, and the amusements we share. These, in the main, have to be provided by parents and guardians, and should be selected judiciously and with earnest prayer to God for direction. And yet, how little attention is bestowed here by those to whom has been committed the custody of young immortality! What an awful account will Christian parents have to render in the final day for their shameful neglect at this point! They labor and sacrifice that their children may have wealth and position, that they may shine in the *salons* of fashion, and be admired for a beauty that is ephemeral; they exhaust their skill in matrimonial diplomacy, that they may maneuver their children into matches that are held to be commercially good, and yet give no time, no prayer, no effort to that training on which character here is to rest, and on which the hope of heaven in a measure depends. We need an awakening, a reformation on this subject in the Church of God—in our Church, once so careful on this point, but now so neglectful. We educate our children more for society than for the Church, more for the world than for God, and it is not astonishing that so many of them learn to despise the faith of their fathers amid the gayety and worldliness for which we train them. If you value the immortality of your chil-

dren, and would save their souls, look well to this matter.

A second instrumentality in this discipline refers to a later period in life—the period of manhood and womanhood—and is that exercised by the individual in the way of will, self-culture, self-denial, etc. We regard this instrumentality as the propelling force in intellectual, moral, and spiritual culture, and as deserving your special attention. And now, that you may get our meaning clearly, we will consider these severally and separately.

1. The first kind of discipline, then, to which we direct your attention is that of the mind. We are so constituted as to be largely dependent on intellectual culture for happiness. It is also essential to enlarged influence. It is in the possession of reason and the power to discriminate between truth and error, between good and evil, that man is distinguished from inferior animals; and when this faculty is permitted to grow up without culture, he is but a remove from the brutes around him. He then becomes the subject of instinct and the slave of passion, and is of but little use to himself or the world. Thought, in the true meaning of that word, is neither voluntary nor spontaneous. It is the result of discipline, the product of hard labor. To think is to toil. It is first to put the brain to work, and then to “let memory observe and register the result.” Now, we do not deny that our mental perceptions are often spontaneous, and that the impressions taken therefrom through the consciousness are, as a general thing, voluntary;

but the work of thinking impresses on one the task of so classifying these impressions, and of instituting such processes of truthful examination into these impressions, as will educe from them a meaning that will bear the test of reason and judgment. It is one thing to apply yourself by hearing or observing or reading or traveling, and it is another to think while you hear and observe and read and travel. Many persons read a great deal and travel much; they also move about with open eyes and attentive ears, and by the help of a well-trained memory they retain much of what they read and see. All this they may have done, and the credulous multitude may marvel at their parrot-like recitals; yet these may never have performed the sublime labor of thought in all their lives. But few men and women ever learn to think at all. To do this, the mind must be disciplined. You must bring to your aid the force of a resolute will, a determined energy, and an unconquerable perseverance. It may weary the frame; it may make the heart faint, and the brow may often throb—yet toil on, for your labor will bring its reward. Rapturous indeed is it to lay tribute on the quick-coming fancies that pour into the mind and the impressions made on the consciousness, and from these to extract a living, glowing thought! It is from thenceforth yours—the child of your brain—and will be to you a “thing of beauty” and “a joy forever.” How many of you have thus learned to think, and who do think? who work out for yourselves, under God, the great problems that meet you everywhere in

your search after truth? who have individuality of thought, never ignoring the help that others offer, yet never surrendering your own personality? keeping in solemn exercise your own powers, yet holding these in abeyance always to the higher decisions of revelation? How many, we repeat, are giving culture like this to their minds? Alas, alas! have not the majority of this generation more concern for the training of a mustache and the fit of a coat, more ambition for the scrubbing of a hand and the rouging of a cheek, than for intellectual competition? Enter the circle of one of our fashionable assemblages, and what is the meed of merit most current? Is it matter, or mind? sense, or nonsense? flippancy, or wisdom? I blush that it is so, yet we see little else than an exhibition of cultivated genuflections and attitudes, and we hear but little more than the unmeaning laugh of affectation and the voluble utterances of nonsense. We appeal to the young here to-day, and ask, Are you content to fritter life away in a poor ambition like this? Will you be the slaves of such an ambition—an ambition that gives the mind no grand outlook, no lofty pinion on which to ride into an altitude in harmony with itself? In each soul here there is the germ of something nobler than you have attained, the capability of something more worthy your nature than you have yet found. We invoke you, by your desire to be happy and your wish to be useful, to put away these toys and address yourselves to the tasks of a stalwart manhood. We appeal to the nobler faculties of your nature, to that ambition from

which all growth in excellence must come, and tell you to arise from your sloth and by culture prepare yourselves for happiness and usefulness. Let that ambition rise higher than the graces of your person; let it sparkle with a glory richer than the blaze of your diamonds; let it be an ambition not such as would sit upon a throne and wear a crown and sway a scepter, but an ambition that would make you priests at the altar of knowledge and kings in the realm of enlarged and consecrated thought. This will enable you to understand yourselves; to fathom the deep meaning of life; to know God—to behold him in the flowers of the field, the bloom upon the woods, and in the glory of autumnal robes. The pillared firmament, with its star-islands shining through the rent cloud-roof over your heads, and its crimson pall of glory laid there by the beams of the setting sun, will then to your vision all wear the garments of the divine.

2. A second kind of discipline that we would urge upon your consideration is moral, or that process by which the inward nature is trained. This part of our constitution has been sadly disorganized. The soul, with all her wonderful faculties and noble aspirations, has greatly degenerated from her high original, and requires to be held in constant check—to be wisely directed; otherwise, all her efforts to recover what she has lost will only involve her in a still greater ruin. It is necessary first to quicken her powers into action, and then guide them toward virtue and holiness. Her affections also need to be watched, or they will go out

after the merchandise of a bankrupt world. It is perhaps one of the most difficult, even as it is one of the most important, tasks in this work of discipline to establish a perfect equilibrium between the mental and moral nature. There can be no true harmony of life without this. We hear much said of beautiful characters. His character is most beautiful who in his self-culture has kept the head and heart abreast; whose mental and moral forces have been made mutually helpful; who has connected by a bond of equality these two great hemispheres of his being—suffering neither to outstrip the other, but bearing each on in the path of progress until they become equal parts of one harmonious whole. Such a character is complete. It may not be perfect, for it can grow and expand as long as life lasts, and even through eternity. We see many persons engaged in what might be called a one-sided culture. They either give all attention to the mental to the neglect of the moral, and in this way become skeptical, or they sacrifice every thing to the moral, and by this means are in danger of running into bigotry. Now, the truth here is, as it usually is, in the middle—is between these extremes. If you would meet the ends of life, and become a fully developed man or woman—a blessing to yourself, a benefaction to your race, and an honor to your God—harmonize your nature. It is a grand nature; yet if it be not poised well, it will be only a grand ruin, a mournful wreck. Therefore we cannot insist too strongly on this unity of the thinking and feeling faculties, this accordance

between the mental and moral nature. Just look around and see how many lives are but incarnate ruins for the lack of it; and especially among some of the most gifted of our race, men who have devoted years to toil and vigils, that the intellect might stand before men a grand hierarch in the temple of letters or science or song, and yet have left the moral nature as a garden luxuriant only with the foulest weeds of vice and the rankest growth of passion. O it is a sad spectacle to see a noble intellect permeated with the light of a grand but bewildered soul, a magnificent but perverted spirit—one full of light, yet a light which, though “dark with excess of bright,” only burns and blackens as it streams like the mad lightning from the angry cloud. Such antipodism between the mental and moral the world has often witnessed. Take as an illustration a name familiar in the history of song—a man of whom, if of any, it may be said,

He soared untrodden heights,
And seemed at home where angels bashful looked.

We believe that Byron's was originally a noble soul; that he had by nature moral capabilities of rare power; and we all know the royal grandeur of his intellect, the gorgeous richness and far-streaming splendor of his imagination; but alas for that lofty soaring mind, and for that proudly stooping soul, and for the nations that heard entranced the numbers of his song, and for the “lesser stars,” of which Pollok speaks, that “bowed in reverence as he, the fierce comet of tremendous size, swept on in

culminating glory!—alas, we say, for him and for them, that that dark and tearless soul should have been lost sight of in the culture given to his mind! O if some loving John could have led him to the cross in the first flush of his young manhood, and if during the years of his expanding fame he had cultivated the moral equally with the intellectual, it would have orbed his name in the rainbow of a deathless grandeur! It would have enthroned him in light celestial, from whence with an unclouded fame he would have held his way on in the heaven of immortality, destined to shed a beautiful radiance on the evening of the world! But instead of that he, after he had

Drank every cup of joy, heard every trump
Of fame, drank early, deeply drank, drank draughts
That common millions might have quenched, then died
Of thirst because there was no more to drink:
As some ill-guided bark, well-built and tall,
Which angry tides cast out on desert shore,
And then retiring left it there to rot
And molder in the winds and rains of heaven,
So he cut from the sympathies of life,
And cast ashore from pleasure's boisterous surge;
A wandering, weary, worn, and wretched thing,
A gloomy wilderness of dying thought,
Repined, and groaned, and withered from the earth;

a melancholy proof that no amount of intellectual wealth can atone for want of spiritual culture. This mournful example, which belongs to the world, appeals to you all for harmony of life. It tells you to so regulate your inward and outward nature, to so blend them into one accordant sound, one great harmony, as that it may send forth a rich

melody from every part and measure of your psalm of life.

The discipline to which we have urged you can be wrought only by an intense struggle, and it is this that causes so many failures among our young people in their efforts to accomplish it. It is natural for the fresh young soul, just entering with unstained affections and impassioned hopes upon life, to be smitten with the charms of that harmony we have this day depicted. They give it unqualified reverence, they see and confess to its nobility, and under the impulse of those better aspirations which a good God implants in the soul—and especially if some kind and sympathizing and loving nature, by those strange affinities that sometimes consecrate the first hour of meeting as the bridal-hour of a tender and holy friendship, should proffer them aid—under these and kindred impulses, we say, the young enter ardently and hopefully upon the task of rounding their lives into a beauty and harmony that will bring them blessedness; yet many of these—alas that it is so!—find the task so beset with difficulties, and the struggle one of such intensity that they sink discouraged and despairing, and submit to bankruptcy, when if they had but toiled bravely they might have become rich in this heritage of blessedness. Now, that you may not be deceived, we tell you that this harmony is born of toil—that none have ever worn its garland without first having to struggle; and that you may deport yourself becomingly in this struggle, we will endeavor to

show you the philosophic reason why this struggle is inseparably linked with all earnest lives.

Its cause is to be found in your organization. That organization connects the tenderest sensibility with the largest activity. No order of animal existence combines these so perfectly as man. By sensation he is connected with nature, and by activity he has power to subdue nature. Left to mere sensation, he becomes the slave of the natural or earthly; but by virtue of the active forces within him he can reverse the order and make nature their ally. And to ascend a step, by sensation he is connected with all humanity, and is inclined to lose sight of his personality; but by activity he has the power to declare and hold inviolate that personality, to think and act for himself, and in his own sacred individuality to become like the only exemplar of a perfect humanity. Now, between these two elements in his organization—both needful, when rightly proportioned, to true harmony of life, yet each inclining to a different direction—between these centripetal and centrifugal tendencies of his nature, we say, there is a continual contest with those who are really striving to live nobly; and hence every man who would make his life a serene harmony, an accordant melody, must expect to be engaged in struggles as long as he lives. These struggles are from within and from without—are inward and outward. They cannot be avoided as long as the soul is resolved on living right. They belong to our organization—differing, it is true, in different persons and according to different circum-

stances, yet inhering in all natures who have wedded themselves to duty and whose purpose is to do duty at all hazards and at any cost. But the struggle to which we would more particularly invite you, as being most important, is that which is from within. It includes that activity which the soul puts forth as she attempts to rise superior to the evil of which she is conscious—the evil that is within, that is a part of her, and which she would conquer. It includes also the attempt she makes to triumph over those outward circumstances of life that tend to increase that evil, such as are found connected with social life, with the current maxims of business, and with the usages and follies born of society and made dangerous because adopted and indorsed by fashion. Now, this inward evil and these fountains from without that feed it make up a formidable opposition to what we are summoning you to. The element of antagonism is, as you see, within you in the form of depraved nature—a heart naturally in league with sin, and made the more difficult of subjection, as we have shown, because the social constitution is unfortunately too often in keeping with this inward depravity; while the Church itself, instead of making aggressions on this social constitution, as she should, compromises her own purity and becomes a partaker of the wrong. Therefore the severest struggles of your life will be from within, and these will be increased in intensity by the surroundings that are without. Some of you will have a severe contest with unamiable tempers; others of

you with appetites adverse to purity—with passions that war against peace of mind and holiness of heart ; in a word, with the essence of evil as it exists in the nature, and with its manifestations made through the social principle as we stand related to it.

These are the contests that lie before you in the way of a true life; and yet in all these you may prove yourself victorious. We would encourage you, it is true—yet we would not deceive you; and therefore we tell you that the victor's song can only be sung by him who with a soldier's arm has conquered his foes.

The Church is already cursed and humanity kept far in the background by the miserable and beggarly lives of so many who profess to be living unto God. O it is pitiable to look upon these caricatured lives—this burlesqued godliness, in which is seen no gentleness, no charity, no overflowing sympathy, no beautiful harmony, no elevated cheerfulness, no grand serenity, such as shone out with such commanding glory in the life of Him who should be our example; but instead worldliness, earthly-mindedness, materialism—in a word, a wild, jarring discord, with no sweet melodies by which to win the world from sin and consecrate it to good. Therefore while we tell you to enter upon a new life, we tell you also that to come up to its full maximum you must count on having to put forth energy; you must expect to have your struggles; you must prepare for battle, for a warfare whose engagements will be severe and protracted, but of whose final issues, thank God, there can be no doubt, if you

but prove faithful to the end. O we are thankful that while religion tells us we must suffer, it bids us rejoice and be exceeding glad, because our reward is in heaven. We are thankful too that the soul of a good man may always, no matter how sorrowing, be calm as the orb'd sun, that shining above the lowering storm knows no darkening shadow; that he has an immovable foundation whereon to rest when the floods are high, and a royal shelterage when the tempest comes. It was this vision of faith rising up before the psalmist as he suffered that wrung from him those jubilant shouts whose echoing strains have floated around the death-beds of the dying, putting on lips where death had planted his paleness words of triumph—glorious words which, as the ascending spirit passed from its prison to swell a loftier peal, lingered with the weeping throng like music from the verge of heaven. Give God praise, then, for life just as it is—for its sorrows as well as its joys, for its suffering as well as its gladness; for suffering itself is sacred when sent or permitted of God. It is a scourge, it is true, yet there is healing in its stripes. It is a chalice, and we know the drink is often bitter, but we know also that strength may come from that very bitterness. It is a crown of thorns, but under the strange alchemy of an overruling Providence it sometimes becomes a wreath of light to the brow it has lacerated.

Now, young friends, will you go forth resolved from this day so to number your days as that you may apply your hearts unto wisdom? Live not for

the world, but for God and humanity. We tell you this day that its smiles are mockeries and its favor gilded deceit, and that you may find it true when too late. Ah! there are many even now, with the smile of bright maidenhood lingering like a dream of heaven on their young brows, who having lived for the world have become heartless and distrustful of all that is radiant in life. Unsatisfied and disappointed, they ask, "Where are the beauty and glory, the sincerity and truth, which in childhood lay like opening flowers all around us?" Alas! they have sown to the wind, and are thus early reaping the whirlwind. They turned from religion when religion was all they needed, and the heart has grown old and weary and almost dead while yet the tint of youth blooms unwasted on the cheek, and they have learned to scoff at the only thing that can bring happiness.

O what is woman? what her smile,
Her lips of love, her eyes of light?
What is she if her lips revile
The lovely Jesus? Love may write
His name upon her marble brow,
May linger in her curls of jet,
The bright spring grass may scarcely bow
Beneath her feet, and yet—and yet,
Without that meeker grace, she is
A lightér thing than vanity.

Your privileges, my young friends, have been great. You have enjoyed the instruction of one whom I have known for years, and to whose rare qualifications for the delicate and responsible duties of his high profession I desire on this public occa-

sion to bear a warm and willing testimony. You have had the benefit also of his able and industrious corps of instructors. These are advantages for which God and your generation will justly hold you responsible. See to it that you improve them faithfully, wisely, and diligently; and may the God of all grace help you to do this, and to remember all your future days so as that you may become wise unto salvation!

David's Despondency and Comfort.

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." Psalm xlii. 1-5.

THERE is this peculiarity about the book of Psalms which applies to no other book in the sacred canon—that it gives utterance to feelings common to every human soul; feelings, too, the most sacred and delicate, and which we do not dare to breathe to our most intimate associates and friends. Such feelings we have all had, and had a thousand times, and hence the soothing power of the Psalms of David. They afford relief when the heart is bowed down under the burden of feelings which cannot be uttered; and the reason why they give such comfort is that they mirror back to us what lies hidden in our own souls. We read what they record, and apply it to ourselves without sus-

pecting that it is only our own self-utterances. Take, for instance, this forty-second Psalm, in which is heard the wail of a sorrow of which human lips but rarely speak, which was voiced by the lips of the suffering Son of Man when from the darkened hill went forth that startling appeal, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This is the grief which the King of Israel had felt, which many since then have felt, which some of you—alas! many—now feel, and from which you may be seeking relief. It is a grief greater than lack of bread, greater than loss of friends, greater than the shipwreck of earthly hopes—in short, a grief greater than all other earthly griefs. It is the grief of spiritual desertion; and it is in this Psalm, of all others, that its solitary utterances are overheard. The cry sent out is similar to that cry of august agony which was poured out when the Father forsook the Son in the great hour of expiation for sin. It was the cry of a mortal, it is true; yet it was one of loneliness, of despondency, of forsakenness—just such as has sometimes crept chillingly through your heart and mine; and it is by inquiring into the circumstances of its human utterance, as in the case of the psalmist, that we can expect to find hope and encouragement. Let us consider, then, the causes of his despondency, and the source of his comfort under that despondency. It is clear that the main cause of his disquiet was the conscious absence of a personal God, for his language was: "My soul thirsteth for God, the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" There was in the

first place, then, a "thirst for God," a desire, a longing after the infinite; and in this he was a type of all humanity. God has constituted us so that nothing that is limited can satisfy us; and hence our love of all that is boundless—of the night and darkness in their wondrous strength, of the sweeping sky, and of the illimitable sea. Hence, too, our dissatisfaction with all that has been or that can be done. Where, for instance, is the good that we do not imagine could be better? the beauty that we do not conceive could be more beautiful? or the sublime which our discontent would not make sublimer? There is nothing which, to our insatiable thirst, might not be better. Our very greatness places us under the destiny of an eternal restlessness—a never-ending disquiet. If man were to be satisfied with what he does, he would have reached the goal of human possibility, and from that moment he would cease to advance. But this is one of the impossibilities of his nature. That nature is "athirst for God," for infinite goodness and beauty, and therefore it is that nothing that man is or can do in this life can ever satisfy him. It is his destiny to be not dissatisfied, but forever unsatisfied; and this, too, because of his eternal "thirst for God"—his everlasting yearnings after the infinite.

But the psalmist was not only "athirst for God," but "athirst for the living God;" and in this he was but the type of your soul and mine, and of our race. What we all want is not only infinitude, but personality, in the One that is infinite. We want a God that lives, one who not only makes love the

law of his universe, but is himself a being whose name is Love. What we want in this world of manifold contrivances is a personal God, in whose bosom order has its center, and of whose being law is the expression—a personal affection, in short, which gives to the skies their trembling tenderness, and to the snow its purity, and to the rain its cleansing; for in the absence of such personality all that we know of wisdom and contrivance and affection are only so many horrible abstractions in a universe where man is left to grope his way in dreariness and solitude.

The exceeding preciousness of the Psalms of David to me consists in the fact that they indicate the voluntary approach of the Creator to the creature. They reveal a personal tenderness toward God, not as an abstraction, but as a living Being and Person. Almost in every page we meet with outbursts of passionate individual attachment which reveal God as a living God—as a person who asks and gives heart for heart, and who inspires love because he feels it himself.

This was the God for whom David was “athirst,” and whose absence shrouded his soul in gloom. This is the God whom theologians have too often hid away in nature and in dogmatic text-books. They have seemed more anxious to give the world proofs of design than they were to give them God—concerned more about giving them doctrines than they were about giving them a living God. He differs too from the God of philosophy. Her first attempt was to substitute “principles” for him—

then "laws," until at last her God was only a law, into which all other laws are resolvable.

The God for whom David thirsted, and who only can supplement human want, is revealed in the Bible not only as a law, but as the life of all that is—as a Being who feels and is felt—a person who loves and is loved again—a living, personal God, who feels my heart throb into his, who counts the hairs of my head, and notices the falling sparrow; who feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies; who condescends even to hear my prayers, and to interpret them through a spirit which has affinity with my spirit. O it is a dark moment in the history of an earnest, thoughtful soul when there fades from its consciousness a sense of this personality! Not even a doubt of its immortality could give keener anguish, for what would be eternity without him? What would immortality be in the absence of this living, personal God? I know of no thought more hideous than that of living forever in a solitude of unbroken dreariness. It was the want of his conscious, living presence that made David cry out, "My soul is athirst for the living God!" and it is that cry, indorsed as it has been by human experience, that makes me say that the desire of immortality is second only to the desire of God.

But the despondency of David was evidently increased by the taunts which the unbelieving and scoffing multitude hurled at him in his spiritual desertion. The opening verse of the Psalm is in proof of this. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

The idea indicated here is that he had been hunted down and mocked—persecuted and mocked by his enemies—and that this, added to the absence of the living God, had cast him down. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.” This figure brings before us the hart hunted down and at bay—its eyes liquid with tears, and mournful from sorrow, and its strength almost gone.

“My tears,” he says, “have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?” They had persecuted him in his spiritual desertion; and in this, too, his experience was but a foreshadowing of what you may expect from the unbelieving multitude who, when you are cast down, are ever ready to ask in derision, “Where, now, is thy God?” The unsympathizing world is always ready to misunderstand and taunt us in our religious perplexities. This you may look for. In spiritual grief they ask, “Why is he not like other people?” When in bereavement you sorrow as others do, they call your sorrow unbelief. When misfortune overtakes you, they comfort you as Job’s friends did him, by calling it a retributive visitation of Providence. In this the world does as it did when the viper fastened itself on Paul at Melita. When they saw that, the people called him a murderer; and so when your soul is crying for an absent God, they will taunt you with the accusation that his deplored absence is proof that you are none of his. These persecutors did the same with Christ in the awful hour of the crucifixion. When they

heard him say, "Eloi, Eloi," they charged him with calling on Elias, when he was calling for the living God, and said, "Let us see whether Elias will come to save him;" taunting him at last with the words, "He saved others, himself he cannot save."

Now, this want of sympathy—for, after all, it amounts to this—this want of sympathy, I say, when the soul is under a cloud, is hard to bear. It is an easy thing to recommend fortitude under such circumstances; but it is no easy matter to bear up when human hands withdraw their help. It is no small trouble when a warm, loving nature is misunderstood and falsely accused, and left to grope its way in darkness and without human sympathy. And the trouble is intensified when the relaxing hand is raised against you, and when the voice that sent you cheerful greetings in your prosperity is heard calling, when adversity comes, "Where is thy God?"

Remember, though, that while from these causes this was David's condition for the time, it was not one of utter hopelessness. The Christian may often have, just as David had, a feeling of forsakenness, and this may subject him, as it did David, to the cruelest taunts; but neither this feeling nor the persecution it may bring is to be taken as a proof that God has really forsaken him. Mourning after an absent God is often as good and as strong an evidence of love for him as is rejoicing in a present, conscious Saviour. Nay, more—it is quite possible that a man may be more truly a child of God even when doubting the existence of that God, and while

crying to him in the anguish of his soul for light and proof and demonstration, than he who has a theoretical belief in the creed, and upon that abstraction is yielding a cold, formal, dead religious service. At all events David, in his spiritual desertion and doubt and persecution, had still some grounds of consolation left. To these, then, your attention is next and briefly invited. And the first ground mentioned in this Psalm was hope. In answer to the question, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me?" he could still stay, "Hope thou in God;" and in this he had a glorious foundation on which to plant himself.

Now, there are two phases in Christian experience which we ought always carefully to note and to discriminate between. There is first a feeling of faith in a present God—a consciousness, in other words, that he is with us, and in us, and about us. This is the highest degree of religious consciousness, and should be sought for continually by every child of God. There is next, in the absence of this, a hope of faith that, although not consciously present, he exists, and will yet reveal himself, according to his gracious promises; and this is the hope that never deserts the sincere and honest Christian. It is a phase of experience, too, into which we are all liable to be precipitated sometimes, and one into which sensitive temperaments are often thrown. These variations are as common in religious life as they are in the natural world. There are days in nature when the sun is veiled in clouds—in clouds

so thick and drear as to leave us with no feeling, no consciousness of sunlight and sun warmth. But this does not destroy the hope of faith in the shining sun. This hope assures us that there is a sun, that he is shining somewhere, and that he will yet shine on us in the future. And so in spiritual life there are hours in which physical derangement darkens the windows of the soul; days in which shattered nerves make life simply endurance; months, and even years, in which intellectual difficulties, pressing for solution, shut out God from the soul. In these seasons it is sadly true that

The days seem dark and dreary—
It rains, and the wind is never weary;

and that the tendency of the soul then is to cling to the “moldering past,” when its language should be:

Be still, sad heart, and cease repining,
for
Behind the cloud the sun's still shining.

As with David, so should it be with us. It should replace faith with hope, and cause us to say: “Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” But you will observe next that David's hope was in God.

Now, the mistake we often make in our seasons of trouble is that we look for comfort in something else than God. We look for it in ourselves—in self-contemplation, in our own feelings, or in self-evolved logical processes and deductions. We look for it just where, in the very nature of things, we can never find it; and the sooner you are made to

see this, the better will it be for you. Let us look into it, then, briefly.

In the first place, the very mutability and uncertainty of your feelings make it impossible for them to give you permanent consolation. Nature itself is not more variable than our feelings. In fact, our feelings are themselves dependent, in a great measure, on the mutations of nature. To-day the sun shines, the air is balmy, the breezes soft and inspiring, and our feelings harmonize with nature; to-morrow the sun is hid, the air is chilly, and we are gloomy and sad. At one time our hopes are unreasonably elevated, at another they are as unreasonably depressed; and that too without any regard to our actual spiritual estate. In this way our feelings ebb and flow like the sea, which is the emblem of instability, and cannot therefore bring us any abiding comfort. If we turn to what we do, we will find that equally unreliable, for, although human actions constitute the true test of character, no man can judge justly of his own acts. Sinners cannot judge of sin, simply because human conduct always assumes a hue kindred to the eye by which it is contemplated. And even when this law is contravened by the Spirit and grace of God, so as to enable the soul to form a just estimate of sin, the result is remorse instead of comfort. For instance, if I see the sin of yesterday as it stands unveiled in the light of God's grace and Spirit, I spend the whole of to-day in mourning over it. And if I spend to-day in mourning over the wasted yesterday, I shall have to spend to-morrow in lamenting

the wasted to-day; and in this way I should make life one perpetual remorse. We must do as David did—hope in God rather than in our feelings, which are so mutable and so deceiving; or in our own acts, of which we are naturally so poorly prepared to judge, and which, when we judge of them, according to the revelations of divine truth, are so well calculated to drive us into hopeless despair. When cast down and depressed under a sense of unfaithfulness, as every true Christian often is, we must hope in God, in his abundant mercy, in his gracious promises, and in his infinite love. When the children of Israel were about to perish in the wilderness, they were told to look not to themselves, not to any human means, for recovery, but to an instrumentality which God had lifted up for their healing. Now, if instead of gazing on the serpent as he had directed, they had looked down on their own wounds to watch the process of the granulation of the flesh, to find out how deep the wound was, and to see whether it was healing slowly or fast—if they had turned away from the divinely instituted means of recovery, and had employed their time in this way, their cure would have been impossible. Every thing depended on their looking away from their wounds and up to the appointed remedy. So it is, my brethren, with us when we feel that our sins have driven God away from us, and left us with our souls cast down and burdened. It is not by analyzing our feelings that we can bring him back; it is not by looking at ourselves that we can propitiate him. It is by looking to God, as did the

stricken Israelite in the wilderness, that we can hope for comfort. It is only when we give up this hopeless and sickening work of self-inspection and turn to God—O it is only by this Christian self-oblivion, and this gazing on God, that we can expect the renewal of our spiritual consolation. It may be that I speak to some whose souls are “athirst for God;” some who are “cast down” because of his absence; some who are now feeling the agony of spiritual desertion, and whose souls are panting for God “as the hart panteth after the water brooks.” To all such I would say, “Hope in God,” for he loves you and pities you. O I rejoice to know that the God in whom we are to hope is not affected by our mutability, and that the changes which so often come upon us do not alter him! I rejoice to know—and this, brethren, is my only hope—that while we are restless he remains calm, serene, and eternally benignant; that while we are low and selfish and mean, and liable to become dispirited, he continues unalterable—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and in whom “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” This is the only comfort left to me in my own imperfect, erring, and beggared life. And this comfort I hold out to you to whom I minister, and who, under a deep sense of spiritual desertion, are often constrained to cry out, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me?” To all such I say, “Hope thou in God,” and am authorized to promise that this hope shall issue in everlasting praise.

A Happy Old Age.

“How old art thou?” Genesis xlvii. 8.

THIS, my friends, is a question of profound significance. It comes as a voice to arrest us in our pilgrimage to the grave; and bids us retrace the steps of gladness or of weariness we have taken, and inquire what evil we have overcome, what passions we have subdued, what virtues we have nurtured, what success we have had in disciplining the mind and heart, with what comeliness we have fashioned our souls, or what deformities we have suffered to remain in the midst of the manifold helps which the good God has given for their removal. It is also a question from which most of us shrink when once we have planted our feet firmly in the path of manhood and womanhood, and have begun the journey in earnest. Indeed, with some people it is an exceedingly delicate question—one which it is considered altogether against popular etiquette to ask, and which some have resolutely determined not to answer, as if silence would stop the plowshare of time, or keep the opening furrows concealed. These silent ones, though, should not be condemned too hastily. They are but following an instinct which is universal,

and which asserts their immortality—an instinctive yearning for perpetual youth. There is a feeling in the soul—all men have it—that recoils from the thought of growing old. It may be accounted for, at least with the virtuous and good—with these it may be accounted for on the ground that while the body is giving indications of age the soul within it feels nothing of decay. The dissimilarity in this respect between the temple and its inhabitant—the one falling into dilapidation and the powers of the other expanding and enlarging the while, makes age to the soul a thing that seems unnatural; therefore it shrinks from the thought that the house in which it abides is becoming old and must soon be laid in the dust. It seems to struggle against the conviction, unwilling to admit it to itself. But after all our efforts to keep age away, it will come if life be continued. The hair will whiten, the eye will go back into its cavernous depths, the limbs will become feeble, the step tottering, and the day will come to each one of us to whom life shall be prolonged when, in the sad words of Solomon, “the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders shall cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.” Yes, we are all going onward to that time, some on the threshold of the way, and some far along the journey, and with all of us “wrinkles will either be made out in God’s sunlight among living things, by the hand of Time, or by worms working in the dark mold.”

Now, since this is destiny, inevitable destiny—

since age must and will come with the trailing years—our purpose at this hour is to point out the way by which we can keep the soul always fresh and young and happy—the art, as one has called it, of growing old gracefully and happily.

My subject, novel as it may seem, is one in which you are all most deeply interested, and I hope to have your attention. Were I to propose to tell you of the fabled fountain of youth—to show you that it was a reality—but little that I would say, however commonplace, would be forgotten. I come, my friends, to tell you of a better fountain, the golden water of which you can all have without the travel of many miles and the expenditure of money. Hear me, then, and remember what I may say when you go home and in all your future life.

The great secret of growing old happily may be given in one word—love. This is the alchemist in whose forge the passing years are to be refined of their decaying tendencies—the alembic in which age, when cast, comes forth radiant with the light of immortal youth. By love we do not mean passion; we mean that sentiment which purity and goodness call into existence, and from which pleasure, rational and refining, follows. In this sense love and sympathy are almost interchangeable. He who has sympathy has that part of love which is nearest akin to heaven; and it is of love thus hallowed that we speak; it is this love that will enable us to “grow old gracefully and happily.” Now, it is the soul that is susceptible of this love, and hence, in all our efforts to prepare for a happy

old age, especial attention should be directed to its culture and relations.

1. And now the first direction we would give is that love be kept in strong sympathy with the young. This, if the inward nature be rightly regulated, will be an easy task, and for the reason that God has implanted it as an instinct in the soul. He has so created us that the heart of age naturally turns toward the young as to an influence that will not only be conservative of health, but serve as a preventive to that depressing influence which age brings to the body. We may divert this tendency, we may change this instinct, by an indurating, worldly process; and it is of your exposedness to this danger that we would warn you. Let a man so give himself up to business or pleasure or ambition as to have no time or disposition to romp with his children, no hours of relaxation in which he can enter into the spirits and feelings, the studies and amusements of the young, and he will soon degenerate into an incarnate ledger or sensualist, according to his pursuit. No man reaches this condition, though, without a struggle, for God has given love for the young as the soul's first and richest portion; and even when business and care and sorrow have almost despoiled us of this portion, we sometimes in our bitter moments cry out:

"O would, I were a boy again,
When life seemed formed of sunny years,
And all the heart then knew of pain
Was wept away in transient tears!"

It was to us the beautiful gate of the temple of

life. "It matters little how gorgeous the temple may be when entered, how majestic the arches, how long the vista, how richly illuminated and emblazoned the windows, or how heavenly the music that thrills its iris-tinted silence, we never forget the precious moments spent in lingering at the portal, the glorious rosette above it, and the sky-born melody of the chimes that filled our ears and hearts with welcome." God bless the dear children, we say, for with all their little faults of temper and speech, they are the best part of the world! Apart from its utility, it is goodness, unspeakable goodness in God to hallow our firesides with the presence of children. They are the violets in the garden of humanity which he sends to gladden the desert of life and to make beautiful our homes. And even when after time has transformed them into the stalwart workers of the age, they come to us again in the forms of grandchildren, as if the good God would surround us with these angels of the way until the journey ends, and we pass up to our own immortal youth. As an evidence of this instinct, we point you to the additional fact that all our ideals wear to us the form and beauty of youth. We never create them old, nor does imagination ever allow age to be connected with them. The ideals of fiction, too, are always young. The embodiments of poetry come to us clothed in youthful attributes. We dream of our dead not as old or wasted, although they may have passed into the grave with tottering footsteps and emaciated forms. The mother, who with the silver of sixty winters

beneath her snowy cap we laid away in the churchyard, comes to us in our night visions not as when we parted from her, but radiant with the beauty of youth; we think of meeting her not as one old and infirm and decrepit, but as one from whom every trace of age will have disappeared. "There are to be no thin, silvery curls upon the brow of that mother, but in some sweet way all the hallowed graces of maternity and the unfathomable tenderness of a soul disciplined by sorrow are to be associated—interspersed—with the beauty and youth of the bride." So do we think of our dead, and so do we think of the angels. To the soul immortality is always young, and heaven and youth everlasting and inseparable thoughts.

Now, if you would grow old happily, cultivate this instinctive love for the young, for childhood, for youth—for young manhood and young womanhood. I do not envy that man's dignity whose stereotyped rigidity cannot unbend to the sports of children, nor do I desire to emulate that man's religion who frowns into silence the playful ebullience of the young, to whom the school-boy's lusty shout and the school-girl's joyous laugh are an insult to the moral law, and whose presence is as the shadow of death in the presence of young men and maidens. Such a man may be young in years, but he is an antediluvian in heart and feeling and soul. Let no such man be trusted, for he is a theologic fossil, and belongs to an age that is dead.

2. Next in order as a help to a happy old age we would recommend connubial sympathy, or the love

that hallows the marriage bond. According to Genesis man was created first, and then as his complement woman; and the two became one. Therefore, marriage is of God; and all history, individual and national, is in proof that morality and happiness have been made to depend on its sanctified observance. "The springs of the soul," it has been said, "abide in the affections." If these are properly fed, either by love of the young or by love in its higher and stronger manifestations, they mount into perennial youth. Next above the love of the young, therefore, comes connubial love, as a conservator of the youthful feeling of the soul. Two married hearts that come together in early life, and have lived in the harmony and love which constitute real marriage, never grow old. The love they bear to one another is an immortal thing. It is as fond and tender as it was when they pledged their faith to each other at the altar. Such a love as this can rise from no other than an immortal fountain. The fires of passion may die, desire may burn out like a candle, yet, chastened and purified, this love—a product of essential youth—becomes the conservator of youth. The pine in your forests produces its resin, and the resin preserves the pine from decay centuries after the life that produced it has passed away. So with real affection in married life. It is the spring from which comes forth the elixir of life, and whosoever drinketh reverently and faithfully has found the unwasting fountain of youth, has passed through the guarded gate into his recovered paradise. To true marriage, such

as God ordained—marriage entered into from a sober conviction that each has found in the other his moral and intellectual complement, she her wise counselor and strong protector, and he his tender friend, the answering voice to the demands of his soul, the attending and ministering companion of his earthly life—such marriages will keep the spring violets fragrant in the soul while the winds of white winter are beating around the mortal tenement.

3. There is yet another manifestation of love on the culture of which much of the beauty of old age depends—our love for man as our brother in sorrow and struggle and discipline. There is nothing that will more surely deaden the soul and blunt the sensibilities and the affections than selfishness. Its influences are so certain that you can read their record even on the face of youth—in the hard lines, the compressed lip, the sinister glance, and that indescribable haze which seems to shut in every good impulse and generous sentiment which nature longs to send out in youth-time from every soul. How else than ossified can such a soul become, forced in upon itself, with no receptivity, no prepared, fallow ground, no glad affections nor good deeds to send out into the broad field of humanity on embassies of love and good-will? It must by the inexorable law of fate become, in process of time, a fetid lake, walled in from the healthful breezes and sunlight, reeking with deadly malaria and sending out only stench and corruption. The feeling of age to such a soul has been

compared to the effect on life which being doomed to live "in an old damp house, dingy with dirt and reeking with rottenness," has. It draws away the vital forces; it diseases the affections; it puts out love; and would, if any thing could, drink up immortality itself.

If you would grow old gracefully and happily, then, put away selfishness, and place yourself in sympathy with your race. That race is made up of immortality like yourself—veiled, it is true, and sinful, yet with you it is struggling to cast off that veil and to eradicate that sin; and what more natural than that from a common struggle like this there should be born a common affection and sympathy?

It is sad to think of the estrangements to which these common sufferers give themselves, the coldness and falseness in which they indulge, the Ishmaelitish warfare in which they engage, while there is so much to draw them together, and when it is so obviously to their interest to be united. If we examine this question we will find that the whole human race is a vast community with a common origin, with common sufferings—sharing in common blessings, engaged in a common conflict, journeying toward a common grave, and destined to a common immortality. Why, then, these artificial distinctions, this warfare of classes and interests and individuals? The good God whom we are to imitate sends his sunshine and his rain upon all alike. In his wise ordination the food he gives is as sweet to the plowman as to the man of wealth and luxury. If the lat-

ter has the daintier dish, the former has the better appetite. "Into all ears the brook pours the same stream of music, and the birds never vary their programme with reference to their audiences. The spring scatters flowers broadcast; and grass grows by the road-side as well as in the park. The breeze that tosses the curls of your little ones and mine is not softer in its caresses of those who bound over velvet to greet it. The sun shines, the rain falls, the trees dress themselves in green, the thunder rolls, and the stars flash for all alike. Health knows nothing of human distinctions, and abides with him who treats it best. Sleep, the gentle angel of all, does not come at the call of power, and never proffers its ministry for gold. The senses take no bribe of luxury, but deal as honestly and generously by the poor as by the rich."

Now, this teaching of a common providence should convince us of a common relationship; and this common relationship should beget a common desire to help each other. He who is most diligent in giving this help, and most earnest in his sympathy for his brotherhood, will, other things being equal, be best prepared for enjoyment in the decline of life. Pleasant memories of a life where benedictions have descended upon his race will come as perfume from wasted roses; and though the vase may be broken, "the scent of the roses will hang round it still." Live thus, my friends, no matter what may be your condition or employment. It is a great mistake to suppose that this spirit of well-doing is restricted to the great and rich. It

may enter into every life. "It is the right apprehension of things only that is wanting to make the peasant cottage as glorious as the palace of the prince. Most men look upon their employments as commonplace." They feel as if some other condition and calling would be more favorable to the manifestations of that sympathy we are commending. The plastered wall, the humble table, the poor fare, and the daily toil—how opposed all this seems to these laborers of love! and they think that could they live in palaces of marble and be clothed in fine apparel, and move about in state with plenty of money, they could and would do much. My friends, this work of sympathy can go on in the humblest abodes as well as in the highest. A human heart throbs beneath the beggar's gabardine as warmly as the king's does under his royal purple; and it is the heart that gives out this sympathy, and in giving it out feeds its immortality. "Thou livest in a world of beauty and grandeur, a dwelling which God hath built for thee; and here thou art to perform thy ministries of sympathy to men. If thy circle is small, all thou hast to do is to fill it with gladness. If God enlarge it, then thou wilt have the more work to do. Only be content to work where you are, leaving it to the great Overseer to choose whether it is best to go higher or remain where thou art."

"There are those who, with a noble but mistaken aspiration, are asking for a life which shall in its form and outward course be more spiritual and divine than that in which they are obliged to live.

They think that if they could devote themselves entirely to what are called works of philanthropy—to visiting the poor and sick—it would be something worthy of their efforts; and so it would be. They think that if it could be inscribed on their tombstones that they had visited millions in sickness, and carried balm and soothing to as many hearts, it would be a glorious record; and so it would be. But let me tell you, my friends, that the million occasions will come—will come too in the ordinary paths of life, in your homes and by your firesides—wherein you may act as nobly, and show as real a sympathy as if all your life long you had visited beds of sickness and pain. These occasions will come, I say, varying every hour—occasions in which you may restrain your passions, subdue your hearts to gentleness and patience, resign your interest for another's advantage, speak words of kindness and wisdom, raise the fallen and cheer the fainting and sick in spirit, and soften and assuage “the weariness and bitterness of many a mortal lot,” and in this way weave a crown of rejoicing for your head when the snows of four-score years shall have silvered your locks.

O friends, for want of this love, this human sympathy, the earth is desolate and the heavens are but a speaking-vault or celestial mechanism. For want of this, life with many is dull and barren—without interpretation or meaning or lofty motive. For want of it, thousands who might claim a better destiny are drifting onward toward an old age in

which there will be no fresh affections, no sanctified memories, no treasured benedictions wafted from a holy life—nothing but loneliness, remorse, and to thousands the blackness of despair.

4. But more than all as a means of making old age blessed is sympathy with God and harmony with his administration and laws. This is a love which is above every other. It has the possibility of a deeper depth, a broader width, and a higher attitude than any other love, because its object is not only infinite, eternal, and immortal, but he is the supreme God. He is the author also of that immortality which is to be put in sympathy with him. He is its great source and center and end. If we will but make ourselves acquainted with our relations to him—will live in harmony with those relations, will send our hearts out to him in constant, child-like, filial love—our souls will never wear the signs of age no more than God himself. He is and forever will be immortally young. The universe is his—like our bodies, it is to wax old and die; yet, when lives have gone out and systems have perished, God the immortal will live. So when age comes and infirmities crowd upon us, if we have put our immortal nature in love and harmony with his immortality, our souls will still be young and fresh and glorious. Love will have sealed them with immortal youth—love of the young, love of children, love of bosom companions, love of our fellow-man, and more than all, and above all, love of God. It is

Love, the divinest of the train,
The sovereign of the rest,

that weaves this beautiful chaplet for the brow of age; and he who has most love has most happiness, as he stands the last of his generation, the young heaping their ministries of love upon him, and the glad angels waiting to bear him to his God.

These, my dear young friends, are the timely directions we would give you to a happy old age. Follow them, and you need not fear the march of time nor shudder as the hour comes when you will find your locks tinged with gray and the long furrows beginning on your brow. Keep the heart fresh, and the soul will always be young. Cultivate a deep and earnest sympathy for those just bounding into the path of life, a deep devotion to those who are walking side by side with you along that path, and more than all keep your soul in perpetual harmony with God and goodness and heaven. Then, to you, age instead of stealing away your true strength and blessedness will bring a large increase of each. Then, as with feeble step you move among the generation yet to come, the light of love beaming from your brow, and the tone of sympathy issuing from your lips, will draw the young around you in filial reverence, and their love will be to you as dew to the drooping plant.

We talk of the strength of young manhood, and of the beauty of early womanhood; and strong he is, and majestic and beautiful too is she in her sweet thoughts and hopes and radiance; but there is no strength like that of old age strong in love—there is no beauty equal to that of old age beautiful in affection. O beautiful age! thrice beautiful! I rev-

erence you when I look upon you thus, for in the serenity and peace that sit like twin monarchs on the brow of the old who are thus sanctified I behold the truest types of the beneficent God; the gentle words and kindly sympathies for the young that fall from their honored lips seem to me most akin to the soft speech of God's angels; and more than all to me, such is the old age of her who gave me birth, and who to my vision is even now, tottering as she is under the burden of eighty years, beautiful in her holy sympathies, her tender love, her calm Christian trust, and her perfect ripeness for her heavenly home. Some of you have memories this day of those who were thus beautiful to you, but who have been removed to the fountain of immortal youth. The gate-way has opened, and they have been led through by the angels and are with God. Why weep for them, when you know that they rest from life's labors, and that their works do follow them?

Ye are not sad to see the gathered grain,
Nor when the mellow fruits the orchards cast,
Nor when the yellow woods shake down the ripened mast;
Ye sigh not when the sun, his course fulfilled,
His glorious course, rejoicing earth and sky,
In the soft evening, when the winds are stilled,
Sinks where his islands of refreshment lie,
And leaves the smile of his departure spread
O'er the warm-colored heaven and ruddy mountain head;
Why weep ye then for him who having won
The bounds of man's appointed years at last,
Life's blessings all enjoyed, life's labors done,
Serenely to his final rest has passed,
While the soft memory of his virtues yet
Lingers like twilight hues when the sun has set?

The Final Deliverance.

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Romans viii. 19–23.

THESE words have been justly regarded by many as exceedingly difficult of comprehension. Some, understanding the apostle as having before him as his object an exhibition of the Christian’s hope of a resurrection, restrict the passages in their application to that change which the body is to undergo in its revival from the grave. Others give to these scriptures a wider interpretation. They comprehend in the meaning of the terms creature and creation all things animate and inanimate. They accordingly hold that inasmuch as this entire planet, including the vegetable, animal, and rational existences of which it is composed, has suffered by the introduction of sin into the world, so also will it in all these departments par-

take of that deliverance necessitated by the existence of evil and originating in the love which the Father bears toward the subjects of his fashioning hand. To this august meaning of these words of wonderful import we have been compelled from the weight of conviction to yield. We cannot regard them as announcing a deliverance less glorious than the bondage in which the imprisoned groaned, or as promising a renovation less majestic than the prostration of the temple was awful. As far as ruin had wasted the palace in which God had placed his noble image, or as sin had disrupted the harmony of its occupant, so far do we understand the text as giving assurance of the remodeling of the one and a restoration of the other. So far as the harmony of creation has been interrupted, or the intellectual deranged, or the moral impaired, so far does the text give promise of regainment. We understand it as setting forth the grand spectacle of a world with its millions of diversified existences, comprehending those guided by instinct and those endowed with reason, and including with these the whole material being—all as destined to a magnificent deliverance and renovation. It also indicates that of this deliverance, or renovation, there is also a general expectation among all its subjects manifested by the groans and convulsive agonies of a world restless under the irrepressible desire; for, says the apostle, “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”

What a picture this presents of a ruined world—a torn and disrupted creation, a homeless orb,

sobbing though all its forms of animal and intellectual life, and all sending into the ear of the Infinite a groaning and travailing supplication for deliverance! "And not only they," continues the apostle, "but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" even these also are represented as under the travail of a mighty expectation of an hour when the body, over which the banner of death is to wave, would burst its cerements and stand forth in renovated life and with renewed splendor—the immortal, the indestructible product of Him who hath unbarred the gate of immortality to a world in bondage to death. Such is an outline of the picture, the analysis of whose shades of gloom and light is to claim your present attention.

The task is appropriate to the occasion of our solemn assemblage. We meet at the call of death. Another of our fellow-travelers has gone down into the bondage of which we are this hour to speak—has descended into the land of "corruption, earth, and worms," and awaits that deliverance which is to admit her into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. What topic, then, could be more befitting the mournful circumstances of the hour? and what, then, could have more of comfort to those who mourn, but whose sorrow is not without hope, than that of redemption from ruin and decay through Him that hath loved us and given himself for us?

Therefore, we shall in the further consideration of these words,

I. Regard them as affording, first, a humiliating view of the bondage in which the whole creation is groaning and travailing, together with some of the attending circumstances of that bondage; and

II. As unfolding, in the second place, that general deliverance, or redemption, from decay and ruin and death which is to pass on the whole creation.

We are before you, my hearers, to paint a picture not for your approval or dislike, but for its harmony with truth. Therefore, we summon you, and with you the entire world, to the sitting; and shall now proceed in an attempt to do our duty faithfully, and fearlessly, leaving it in calm confidence to God and his Spirit to direct the results.

1. The first view presented in the text is that the whole creation is in the bondage of corruption. This representation bears with it a fearful significance. It teaches a truth to which the instincts of every man and the observation of all ages have borne testimony, yet from the force of which the thoughts of the vain and worldly have been turned by enterprises not less profitable than they have proved absorbing. That truth is that all are under doom of death; that its sentence, with all that is implied primarily and secondarily in that sentence, has been passed on all flesh; that it is suspended over all, with the authority and rigor of a law that is inevitable—a law for the execution of which God himself, from whose presence and power there can be no escape, is pledged; that with the same inevitability it rests over the whole creation, inanimate as well as animate, vegetable and animal as

well as rational and spiritual—decomposing and dooming the one to decay, and shedding upon the other weakness, disorder, and corruption. By virtue of this law, this homestead of our race, this planet on which so many generations have lived and in whose bosom they now sleep, is under doom of dissolution; and thus considered, the whole earth is but a dying clod. We know that even now, amid the manifold premonitions of its doom that may be seen, the spirit of beauty has her temples here, and that the worshiping soul may kneel at her shrines and pay her high reverence; that the poet may wander amid her vernal woods, her solemn groves, her flowing brook-sides, her old mountains, her lakes and seas; and that smitten with the shadow of the Divine that hangs like a pall of glory over all these, as he sees them in the deep effulgence of the still morn or beneath the light of the blue-girdled stars, he may cry out with a worshiping Shelley, “O awful loveliness!” We know too that however doomed to decay, and however marred creation may be, there are melodies running through it that entrance the soul—voices which, while they cause the listening spirit to grow enamored of their sweetness, are proof of a richer tide of song that must have flowed from the organ of creation before its cords were swept by sin and its harmony was broken by transgression. We hear them in the sighing breeze, in the carol of happy birds, in the “liquid lapse of murmuring streams,” and in the tones of love and friendship that bring us memories of paradise and yearnings

for heaven. They come to us in the voices of our "loved ones at home;" they steal up from our altars of prayer, and are not only remembrances of a beauty that was perfect, but pledges that there will yet come a time when the spirit of beauty and purity will be enthroned again amid a perfection compared with which the loveliness that has declined will be deformity itself. And if the visible creation has so much to charm the eye and to gratify the taste in its present estate, ravaged as it has been by sin, with what transcendent glory must it have appeared when the Divine Artist first unveiled it to the gaze of wondering angels, and, pronouncing it very good, placed it in the great family of worlds to sing and shine along its untried rounds. Nor can we estimate the growth in beauty which, according to the law of progress, it would have shared had it escaped the desolation caused by evil until now. Its landscapes and stretching views would have been gathering fresher tints as rolling cycles passed, while the music with which a purer atmosphere was then charged would have gathered sweetness with the flight of years, until the whole creation would have trembled with the thrilling harmony. Instead, however, of this growing affluence of beauty and music may be seen evidences of a marked decline—a proof that a humiliating transformation has passed on our planet since its birth. It lies within the bondage of corruption and under doom of death. To this impending doom the mighty solitudes of nature, the waving forests, the imperial mountains that enthrone the thunder, the

rocky heights on whose rugged peaks the lightnings dance, and over valleys and plains where the angels have left their handwriting in the scattered, blushing flowers—all, all must submit; and our world itself is destined, when its fortunes are concluded and its revolutions ended, to be wrapped in its winding-sheet of flame and laid away in the charnel-house of departed worlds.

If we turn to the lower order of animals, we find that this law of decay and death is upon them also, and that to its authority they successively bow. The discoveries of geology show that an almost total change has passed on them since they were made subject to this law—a change of structure, size, etc.—in evidence of which are the fossils which have been disentombed from their primeval beds. What has been said of inanimate creation and of the brutes is also true of man, and when contemplated in its application to him becomes instinc with a meaning the most appalling. Although descended from God and kindred with the angels—although thus royally fathered and highly allied—he too groans in this bondage of corruption and must die, wherever found and however conditioned.

Of the true nature of the human body when it was first made the dwelling-place of the immortal we know but little. Man was then, as we think, exempt from all physical imperfection. He had been created in the image of God—had been pronounced “good;” and possessing as he did the attributes of an intellectual and moral nature, and these being unimpaired, we cannot conceive of him

in any other respect than as combining in his person all that was dignified in attitude, perfect in symmetry, beautiful in feature, and graceful in movement. His body, we believe, had none of the elements of decay, and was not susceptible of disorganization; or, if it was, he had access to that which could perpetuate life and render him physically immortal. But when sin entered, death followed; so that for six thousand years death has been a visitation of organic necessity, as well as of punitive visitation—has been a part of his physiology. The tree of life has been guarded from mortal approach by “helmed seraphim and sworded cherubim,” and death has mowed down its millions. Like a restless conqueror, he continues to “plunder earth of her families, rob time of his generations,” and to roll his car over the vanquished millions of our race. The very weakness of our bodies and the means we adopt for their preservation testify to this bondage.

Why do we tax human ingenuity for means to mitigate the fatigue attendant on exertion; to quicken the tardiness of motion; to postpone the imbecilities of age, and to assist the decaying senses? It is because we apprehend, and indeed painfully realize, the wear and tear which the play of years is exerting on our frames. Why are our professional men driven to scientific researches, the object of which is the counteraction of human suffering superinduced by organic derangement? It is because disease is upon us, heralding the dark issues of this bondage. The ardor of the student

in anatomy; the zeal of the botanist in his experiments upon plants; of the chemist in his analysis of minerals, and his torturings of nature; of the physician in prescribing careful regimen, etc.—are all so many proofs that man, restless under the approach of this bondage, would lay contribution on matter and mind to delay its approach. Wherever the eye can turn it is met by memorials of this bondage. The graves of affection and friendship lie thick around the habitations of the rich and the poor. The white tombs of our dead sleep in the still moonlight, and in their silence preach to us of our certain end.

This congregation, with its remembered bereavements, the badges of mourning we see among you, the bleeding wounds that open afresh as memory wanders through the past—these things tell us that our stay here is short and uncertain; that although the pulse may bound with life while I speak to you now, and the warm blood may leap healthily along its appointed channels at this moment, to-morrow it may be struck by the chill of death, and creeping languidly back to the heart settle there in stillness and stagnation forever.

This doom hangs upon us all alike, nor can we fly beyond its certain execution. The High Chancellor of the skies has said, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” and no mortal pleading can cause its repeal. The summons will come, and although with the dying Altamont you may plead for an hour, a moment of time, yet to all your cries and shuddering agonies the Judge will be inexorable; for the chain of bondage is on you,

and you must wear it until the hour when unpitying destiny shall hurry you into the judgment presence. Even now the clanking of that chain may be heard above the songs of pleasure and the voice of flattery by which your guilty soul is being deceived. It nestles amid the bright jewels with which you strive to gain the word of a poor ephemeral admiration. Neither the rosy hue of health nor an athletic frame and a vigorous constitution can give security against the approach of the dark destroyer. The active limb that bore you here, and the young heart so full of worldly happiness and so occupied with future hopes, will soon be rigid and cold. The countenance which now wears the tinge of health, and on which the flowers of youth and beauty bloom with dewy freshness, will soon wear the ashen paleness of the shroud, the coffin, and the tomb; and those flowers, now the source of a ruinous vanity and the pride of your circle of friendship, will be withered beside the grave's banqueting worm. It may be—God of mercy enforce the thought upon the one of whom it may be true!—it may be, we say, that already your tree of life has been riven by the hold of some mortal disease, and that the feebleness with which you push forward the enterprises of life and the languor wherewith you engage in the rounds of fashion tell to your friends that you are doomed; and yet, with strange infatuation, you banish every solemn thought from your mind, and persist in engrossing that mind with the vain show of the present. These premonitions of death, such as God in mercy sends to many in

the form of slow decline, these are but the fadings of autumn before the certain blight of winter, the whispering winds that tell of the desolating tempest that only lingers that you may seek a place of shelterage. The damp dew of the grave may be settling on your pale temples, the cold shadow whose touch is death may be circling around you in your folly, and before another message is borne to you "the harps of heaven may ask your hand, or the groans of the damned wail the dirge of your destiny." Strive as you may to shake off a sense of this bondage, it will be felt. "I must die" is a thought that meets us like an accusing ghost at every stage of the journey of life. It is an impression which nothing can remove. It comes amid the lights of the festal hall; it floats in the melody of song; it mingles in the wild witchery of the dance; it comes—yes, it often comes—at the twilight hour, darkening with its shadows and murmuring to the thoughtful spirit exhortations to readiness; and amid the midnight hush its whispers of "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment," steals upon us slow and sad and solemn.

2. A second circumstance in this picture of humiliation is the subjection of the creature unto vanity. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." We learn from this that the change which passed on the world was not by the concurrence of those who have lived since, but by Divine permission. Both the inani-

mate and animal creation were without will to choose, consequently the decay of the former as well as the mortality of the latter were submitted to, not willingly—that is, not with their desire or consent—but by reason of him who hath subjected the same.

Now, some understand the pronoun him, in the text, as personating the great tempter, through whose seductions sin came into the world; others refer it to Him who was the victim of that tempter's policy; while others still construe it as having allusion to God himself, who permitted that policy. Either of these interpretations could be allowed without violence to the instruction of the text. The great fact to be observed here is that the entire creation has been reduced to vanity; that the curse of God hangs over it; that death riots upon its loveliness as seen in the decay of its forests, the mortality of its animals, and the vain show in which its intelligences walk during their stay on earth. With them life is little better than *Vanity Fair*, luring its thousands on to sin and death. Were it even possible for the present to flow on in undisturbed security, the fact that it must terminate, and that its termination may be unexpected, would envelop all its pomp and magnificence with a hollow mockery. The grave would still yawn before us, the baffler of our plans and the end of our mightiest purposes. We have only to look around us to be impressed with the fact that life in its most attractive form is but a vain show, and that man, as he walketh in it, vexeth himself in vain.

We behold on one hand the young, enraptured by visions born to vanish in an hour; on the other we see the mature, engaging in the present with an interest and an activity that would indicate a belief that this, and not the future, was the scene of their immortality. We see age itself tenaciously clinging to life, and battling with undiminished ardor amid its schemes of fortune and fame, urging their way to success even while trembling on the verge of the grave. On every side we behold men merging their whole existence into time—reversing life and immortality—clinging to the husks of a bankrupt world, starving the immortal amid abundance, and striving to fill the arms of the soul with shadows while God the Eternal is tendering them infinite supplies.

Open your eyes upon the moving cavalcade—composed as it is of your most intimate associates, the members of your own household, in which you perhaps are mingling in self-satisfied and continued fatuity—and behold the vanity of your pursuits, the folly of your course, and, if possible, anticipate and prevent its incalculable misery. Some of you are engrossed with accumulation—sacrificing every thing that you may be rich; others are drunk with ambition, and are panting in a reckless chase after the crown of fame; and others still, to whom the day and home are alike vacant, but who when the night comes sally forth “to the empty pageant or the polluting revel, and with a zeal that shames worthier worshipers push their maddened avidity for dissipation into the blush and beam of the re-

turning day." In this way deluded thousands are expending the precious heritage of time, devoting it to the worship of the "gross and the sensual," and with an insanity whose end will be the mad-house of hell are sealing irretrievably and hopelessly their eternal damnation.

3. This leads us to the third view of the creation presented in the text—namely, that it is now undergoing the agony of an unfulfilled expectation. "For we know," says the apostle, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Here the apostle, as if overpowered with the truth he would communicate, presses one of the loftiest figures of rhetoric into the effort to make known the wild and terrible anguish of a troubled creation—its grandeur marred, its beauty impaired, and the dark tide of death coursing through all its arteries. Beholding it thus marred and ruined and dying, seeing it restless under the gleams of a high and shadowless day yet to dawn, he personifies it as in a state of agony, giving wild and fearful omens of some unrevealed mystery hanging over it, and destined to a future revelation, heaving and groaning under the strange portents of its approaching regeneration, and oppressed with the agony of an unfulfilled expectation; "for the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." This personification is

true. Our world is not at rest. The atmosphere through which it plows its way is impregnated with storm and fire. Its surface is disfigured, and its internal machinery crazy. It wears an unhealthy hue, and its very breath generates disease and death. The flowery carpet, once honored by the foot-fall of angels and of God, now produces thorns and thistles and rude, disjointed rocks. This mighty material temple (apotheosized as it is in song) is but a magnificent wreck. Like a majestic ruin—on which winds have beaten, and whose arches have moldered beneath scorching suns, and along whose broken corridors the wild blasts of winter have been moaning piteously for centuries—she stands, monumental both of her authorship and her decay. Her dreary wastes, the gloom of her unpeopled solitudes, the wintry hardness of her brow, her wild and fitful agitations, all tell that the play of her wheels has been interrupted, and that some mysterious wrong affects her. “The whole creation groaneth.” Her sighs are heard in the trembling zephyr of spring, her moans voice the autumn winds, her groans are howled in the storms of winter, while the jarring thunder blends its deep bass of agony in this mystic concert of woe. “The whole creation groaneth.” From the path where the earthquake travels her voice comes sobbingly and mutteringly. We hear it in the wild anthem of the sea, in the weird-like wail of winter winds, in the “soft and soul-like sound” that steals from waving pines, while from a thousand volcanic mouths its agony is shrieked out to the overshadowing heavens.

We need not dwell on the sufferings of the animal and the rational parts of creation. The shades of this picture are too dark for portrayal. We talk of life as though it were a holiday—a festive march; and so it may be with many, and so it is with all sometimes, perhaps; yet, after all, the world is full of misery. Every heart has its bitterness, and over each the shadow of suffering must fall. Even the smiles we see are half of them mockeries, covering broken or breaking spirits. We are born to pain, and we cannot escape it. It is ours by organic necessity. Pains of the body and pains of the mind—wearing the one to a shadow and depressing the other—will attend us. What agonies of doubt, what hidden grief, what wasting anguish, what silent suffering would be revealed if the secrets of this assembly even could lie uncovered in this presence!—in proof too that the “whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together.”

4. But we learn from the text that this agony, this travailing, is in hope. “The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” We read also in the text that the creature has been subjected to all this travail of agony “in hope,” and that the holiest, among whom was Paul, “waited for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body,” which expressions prove that “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in hope.” How far there may be, as we think there is, an instinctive yearning or anticipation of future good felt among irrational animals we shall not pause to inquire, neither shall we speculate on the

expectancy of enlargement that may be manifested in inanimate creation; but this much will we affirm, that there are signs throughout the vegetable and animal and rational creation that each is in a transition state. The entire creation not only groans, but gives evidence of expectation. Like the insect, which, when verging on the chrysalis, seeks to break away from its imprisonment that it may revel in beautiful expansion in the illuminated atmosphere; so the world gives token of restlessness, as though it too would break away, and expanding into an illuminated palace float out in renewed luster and perfection. The earth, the grand old earth, though God-accursed, is God-expectant. Its very air-pulses and internal arteries throb with heat, as if they already heard the command for a new heavens and a new earth to spring forth from these ashes of desolation. Every thing betokens restlessness and change and hope. The sigh of the tempest, the flash of the meteor, the war of elements above and around us, the disquiet of man seen in the strife and care of life, the heated enterprise, the fierce emulation, the battle-cry of contending armies, the havoc of death in the ranks of animated nature, and among successive generations of men, and above all that high instinct of worship rising from the temple of the soul wheresoever found—all are in proof not only of restlessness, but that “the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” This hope is not confined to latitude or color. It is felt everywhere; for all men, whatever be their

religion or government, have a presentiment of future good, a belief that the present is a contracted sphere, one of bondage, and that a day of enlargement and deliverance will yet come—a day too in which the visions that here steal out on the canvas of the soul shall pass before us crowded with august trains, and peopled with beautiful images, and displaying an amplitude of outline and a perfection of finish for which thought has no embodiment nor language expression. O there is in every breast a mysterious yet powerful instinct that far away in the dim distance some beautiful isle slumbers in unbroken quiet, that its golden shores are in the keeping of angels, and that there, in that stormless haven and amid the glad welcomings of its pure tenantry, the storm-beaten bark of each faithful mariner may find rest and safety. It is an instinct of the soul, and lives through all time, and grows brighter as we enter the shades of the dark valley. We hear it in the gentle moonlight, and the sun writes it with his “whole round of rays.” It is borne to us in the breath of morning, and we gather it from the crimson sunset. In the darkening twilight its voices whisper that the soul is to live when the light of watching stars overhead goes out in everlasting night; and when night comes with her trailing garments to our beds, she whispers the high vision to our souls:

Thick clustering orbs, and this our fair domain,
The tall, dark mountains and the deep-toned seas;
All time, all nature, and all bounds,
As one vast mystic instrument, are touched
By an unseen, living hand;

and the song that rings round the world is that "when this earthly house of our tabernacle" goes down to dust we may have "a building, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Our agony here then is in hope; the bondage of those too who have gone to the grave is also in hope. We wait in hope for a manifestation of the sons of God; and although where the light of the gospel does not shine this expectation may be crude and to us unsatisfactory; yet even there it is felt and acknowledged. The mythologies and religions of the Old World, and of dead ages, give proof of it. The Pantheon was crowded with its manifestations. The mutilated "marble brought from monuments of fallen idolatry, snatched from the waste of barbarism and time, and placed in the museums of Christendom in monitory collection with the wisdom of this world," furnish testimony that an earnest expectation of immortality inspired the hands that fashioned it. This testimony is offered also by the superstitious and religious vagaries of the Indians of the New World. While the ancient pagan cherished the recollection of a golden age, of whose perfection their poets sung and of whose return their religious ceremonies indicated a belief, the savage sings of Elysian hunting-grounds thronged with game and lovely maidens, and placid streams and luscious fruits, where the Great Spirit is to welcome their departing braves at the close of life. These all prove to us that there floats before the eye of the world, even in its savage state, the brilliant prospective of a planet regenerated and smiling in the

light of heaven. Philosophy too has indulged this hope, and those too proud to confess themselves believers in revelation have given proof that they both believe in and are fascinated by this transcendent vision. Although they deny that religion has any thing to do with the philanthropic schemes they advocate, yet they contend that the end contemplated by their political and benevolent enterprises is the bringing on a day of human perfectibility radiant with beauty, and whose air is to be redolent with the melody of a planet free from evil. What, we inquire, are they doing in all this but drawing pictures of immortality? It is the voice of the soul, dissatisfied with the present and going out yearningly into the future for something better. While we have no confidence in those infidel speculations on the perfectibility of human nature wherein economic theories are advocated as the basis on which to rear the prosperity of undecaying empires—speculations so popular among a certain class of infidel philosophers and sentimental *litterateurs* in Europe—we say that while we have no confidence in their practicability, we regard them as giving eloquent homage to the fact that men everywhere are in expectation of a better state of things than the present, of some bright and beauteous evolution in the history of human affairs, the result of which they hope will be the splendors of that radiant free world so rhapsodized in German literature and philosophy.

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves

groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Here the Christian, with all his spiritual wealth in this world, possessing as he does the fruits of the Spirit, even he is represented as groaning within himself, and waiting for some promised change. Although he has been regenerated, has received the first-fruits of the Spirit, has been partaker of heavenly graces, still under the weight of life's miseries and a painful conviction of inward evil with which he has to wage a sore contest, and under a sense that the very graces he shares are only exotics for the full expansion of which life is insufficient—under the sad consciousness that here his best affections sometimes languish, that they are often chilled by contact with evil, that age and gathering infirmities will unfit him for enjoyment here, and that templ'd in the skies he will share a heightened rapture and a perfected bliss—under disabilities and feelings like these, he groans within himself in an agony of desire for a manifestation of the sons of God. Not that he is insensible as to the friendship of this life, the social ties that bind him to others, and those home-delights that give a charm to the present, yet his chart tells him of the general assembly and Church of the first-born, of the Elijahs that have ascended, of the holy and good who have entered before him, and he is fired with the prospect of becoming part of their number. Memory too recalls the passage thither of many of his dearest friends, and some even from his own fireside; and as he thinks of their happy abode, the songs they sing,

the rapture they taste, the glory they share, and as faith images to his exultant soul the beautiful world in which they are so happy, with its enrapturing joy and unutterable bliss, he longs to escape and be at rest in the heaven of his Father and friends. In the wildness of his hope he cries :

“I cannot, I cannot forbear
These passionate longings for home;
O when will my spirit be there!
O when will the messenger come!”

These longings of the soul will come sometimes to every faithful Christian. He will groan for emancipation, having a desire to depart and be with Christ. Gazing out of the windows of his prison-house, he beholds the future all illuminated, gemmed with flashing stars of hope; and as their beams come quivering through the gloom of time, pillowing themselves on the bars of his prison, and even laying their soft light upon the very shadows that come trailing round his soul—ah! it is then that he cries out :

“O Jesus, in pity draw near,
And lull me to sleep on thy breast!
Appear to my rescue, appear
And gather me into thy rest!”

It is this agony of hope, this unfulfilled expectation, that characterizes the Christian. He groans within himself waiting for his adoption, to wit, the redemption of his body. That adoption is incomplete until the trumpet sounds and the dead awake from their graves. In this hope he lives. In this hope he resigns the idols of his heart to the tomb,

knowing that the promise is that he shall again be permitted to fold them to his heart with no fear that death will ever part them again. In this hope he himself dies. He knows that Christ is risen—that his Redeemer lives, that his dust is to be in the keeping of that Redeemer, that the day is coming when under the Divine summons he and his kindred are to put off the mortal and stand forth in their resurrection-bodies, and that from thence death is to be swallowed up of life.

II. But in the second place the text unfolds a general deliverance from all that sin has subjected us to. This opens to us a wide field, and we only regret that time will not allow us to give it more than a passing survey. Of this one thing, though, you may be assured—that the deliverance is coëxtensive with the bondage; for whatever of ruin sin wrought, thank God, the gospel can repair! On this broad platform I plant myself, and with the word of the Lord before me, I will not be driven from it.

God's Son came to redeem us, to retrieve the ruin which sin had caused, to restore all things—material, animal, and rational—to the glory of which they had been shorn; to reöpen the gates of the lost paradise, and to reïnstate the whole creation in whatever transgression had robbed them of. Entertaining this view of the restoration, we believe,

1. That the redemption contemplates an entire remodeling of this planet. We have spoken of its inward convulsions, its stormy elements, its pale, autumn garlands, and of the manifold proofs of

some inward wrong which it gives ; and although it is reserved unto fire, yet through the redemption by Jesus it is destined at some period to be remodeled from its ashes of decay and enameled with beauty and hung with glory, to take its place among the stars and worlds of God, where it will roll on in beauty and brilliance forever.

2. We believe that in this restoration the whole animal creation will also share. They have suffered by sin, “not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected” us all; and we have confidence that the redeeming God will indemnify them in some way for whatever they may have lost by the fall.

3. But the deliverance that most deeply concerns us is that in which believers, called in the text the sons of God, are to have part. These have been redeemed, soul and body; and having accepted the tender of pardon, they are to share a full, perfect, and eternal deliverance. Whatever of stain sin may have put upon the soul, the blood of the Crucified can remove it; and whatever of decay may come upon the body, the energy of the One who has redeemed us can triumph over its power. He can break the chain of death and free slumbering generations from the bondage of the grave. Into this bondage we must all descend. Our nearest friends, our kindred, our families—and not these only, but the entire line of humanity—must by organic necessity, and by Divine decree, go down into the tomb. We know too that it is a dreary bondage, that it is dark and lonely, that it is the prison of gloom, the land of silence, and that once there we are to be sundered from

those high enchantments that make life so attractive to many. No sound of revelry breaks its stillness, no lights relieve its darkness, no laughter is heard among that skeleton throng. No warrior shouts to his conquering legions, no orator sways that vast auditory. The sweets of flattery, the balm of friendship, and the power of love, are all unfelt there. Feeling and thought and motion, all are gone from the captives of the grave. The banqueting worm is their only companion as they slumber on from age to age. Life with them has ended; its pomp and circumstance are over, its gay pageant departed, its revel ended, and all that once tempted their ambition, or roused their activity, or kindled their hope, is as a forgotten dream to those who have gone down into this bondage. Silently they sleep beneath the circling heavens, unmindful of the storm and the sunshine that alternate in nature, and untroubled by the revolutions of time. And so have the prisoners been sleeping since the binding of the first captive, and so will it continue until the trumpet of doom shall summon them from their bondage. But the hour of their deliverance is coming. It is written, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." "They shall not all sleep, they shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The word of the Lord is sure, and it has committed him to this deliverance. He has illustrated his power to deliver in his own resurrec-

tion. Symbols of it have been given in the translation of Enoch and in the fire-chariot of Elijah sweeping over the bright hill-tops of glory and bearing body and soul to heaven. When Christ himself ascended, the shout of the angel was that he would in like manner return when he comes to unlock the vaults of death, and collect his blood-bought treasures. He is our resurrection and life. His own imperishable humanity brought back from the grave is the proof and pattern of ours. The battle-cry of the Christian warrior as he falls before his foe, with the red-cross shield gleaming above his dying head, is "Christ is risen!" This hope has made them unconquerable even in death. It has converted death into a sleep on which the morning of deliverance is to break, and from which in that bright morning they are to come all glorious and divine, to enter upon a Sabbath and a rest whose song and shout are to be eternal. In this hope the believing dead of all ages slumber.

God their Redeemer lives
And ever from the skies,
Looks down and watches all their dust,
Till he shall bid it rise.

And,

Resting in this glorious hope,
To be at last restored,
Yield we too our bodies up
To earthquake, plague, or sword ;

List'ning for the call divine,
The latest trumpet of the seven,
Soon our soul and dust shall join,
And both fly up to heaven.

High on his azure throne sits our Deliverer, waiting for the hour of our "adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" while on hill-side and valley, on the land and in the sea, beneath magnificent marble and in humble places, his saints await his summons; and soon, blessed be God, the rumbling of his chariot-wheels will be heard in the parting heavens, and then, amid the pealing blast of the trump of doom and the cry of the angel of destiny that there shall be time no longer, our Deliverer will come as he promised, and the dead shall arise. The solid marble shall rend, and the waves of the sea part, and amid the roll of mystic thunders and the sound of the judgment anthem, the shrieks of the wicked and the shouts of the righteous, amid the display of a pomp and terror becoming the hour and the work, the earth and ocean will heave their dead millions into life, and the children of God, with bodies embellished with every beauty and made immortal, shall enter through the gates of that temple whose splendor surpasses the combined magnificence of all worlds. Then shall the world's harvest-home be sung. Then shall the discomfiture of hell be complete and the triumph of our Deliverer perfect. An enthralled world will have cast off its bonds, will have emerged from its prison, will have entered into the liberty of the sons of God. Then that manifestation of which the text speaks will have come. But of that liberty and manifestation who can speak adequately? It will be a freedom from all sin, and a manifestation of all glory. The stain of passion

will be gone, the contest of evil will be done, the war of temptation will have ended, and the soul, purified in its affections, strengthened in its powers, and under the control of the Divine, shall then and forever wing its flight along the heaven of an infinite progression, knowing more and sharing an increasing rapture as it speeds its course along the ages of eternity. The shadows of time will be lost amid the manifested glory of the eternal, while the loftiest memory that will hold its place amid the apocalypse of that glory will be the memory of Calvary. All else will be lost, forgotten, as the soul rises from order to order, or ascends from height to height, or passes from blaze to blaze, in its infinite ascent; and thus it is to continue forever, knowing no abatement of zeal or decline of ardor.

This is the deliverance promised us, and the liberty for which we pine. Even the hope of sharing it is almost too much to feel and live. What then will be the fruition we know not, but of one thing we are confident—that is, that to live in its anticipation robs life of gloom, and that to die in sight of its unfolding visions takes from the grave its terrors. Living or dying, then, the Christian only is rich—rich in hope here and in assurance of an imperishable heritage in the skies!

Life Spent as a Tale that is Told.

“We spend our years as a tale that is told.” Psalm xc. 9.

WHAT is life but a succession of changes, which, in coming, make their impressions of joy or sadness, then fade in the distance and are finally forgotten? It is like “journeying through a hilly country where we often see only the objects close at hand,” and where the connection of one part with another is shut out by the windings of the road over hills and across ravines and through thick forests. In these journeyings the traveler now and then comes to an open summit which seems as a watch-tower lifted up over all the region, and as he pauses there much of the ground over which he has passed breaks upon the eye at one view, and much of that which is before opens on his vision. It is thus that we journey through life, occupied mainly with single hours and single days, which bring with them their individual labors and cares, their successes and reverses, their joys and sorrows; and these one by one give place to others, and are lost sight of in the intricate windings of the way. Still we are journeying, forever journeying—forever passing from one period of time, and forever entering upon another, with hearts forever palpitating

with various emotions, with sadness for the past, anxiety for the present, or hope for the future, and at rare intervals only gathering lessons of wisdom from the experiences that are gone. We fail to note them down, to call them up, to consider the relation of one thing to another—of this day or hour to the one that is gone—and by our very carelessness lose many a valuable lesson which the passing years might teach us. As one may carelessly read a book and fail to gather half its meaning, or glance at a picture and perceive not half its beauty, or part from a traveling acquaintance with but little knowledge of him, so may we, by our inattention to the periods and events of life, fail to become wiser and better as the years of our pilgrimage glide noiselessly on. We glance off from events before we realize their meaning. We hasten on to new things without reading yet more valuable lessons in the old. We live too fast, and as a consequence most of us fail to live wisely.

Near the closing hours of the week just gone, if you had looked in upon one of the happy homes of your city, you might have seen, perhaps, a rosy child seated at his mother's feet, and with loving, wondering eyes and hungering ears listening to a story she was telling him. With what interest he hangs upon her words, and how eagerly he enters into every detail until the story is done and the mother's voice is hushed! And then how he gazes into the pictured embers, seeing all manner of fantastic figures and changing forms upon the opening and shutting face of the red coals and the gray ash-

es, until at last the eye sinks, the head nods, and the drooping little sleeper is borne off safe to bed! The night passes, and the little fellow is soon occupied with the events of the new morning. He has a vague remembrance of the sweet excitement of the last evening, but the wild fancies it brought are soon swept away. They grow dimmer and dimmer in the mind, until at last they lie there as films of spider-web float with long threads glistening in the summer air. It is just in this way that we, who have passed from childhood, "spend our years as a tale that is told." We remember these passing periods, crowded as they are with incident and interest and responsibility, full as they are with events which at the time burden the heart with agony or expand it with happiness—we remember them, we say, vaguely, dreamily, and too often without improvement. The heat and glow of the present are quenched when the present becomes the past. Days come in with form and sound and motion like the coming in of crested waves; like them, they break upon the shore of the present. They cover it with millions of sparkling, evanescent gems. These dissolve and recede with the flowing tide, and are lost again in the black depths, while new days, like new waves, foam and sparkle, and break and die away, as others did.

These divisions of time, as they come to us, have individuality; but as they depart that individuality is lost in the great aggregation of the past, and the receding years seem to us but a part of the ocean of time, which has been widening since time began.

My friends, we stand now on one of those elevations which the traveler sometimes climbs in his journey, and which, as we said, serves as a watch-tower from which he can survey the ground he has gone over and glance at what is before him. Some of us, like him, may be weary and sad—far from our home and with longings to reach it, that we may rest. Therefore, let us pause in our journey and from this eminence—this dividing Sabbath between the year that is departing and the year now struggling into birth—call up the past, with its sunshine and shadow, and turn our eyes courageously and hopefully upon the future as it opens to us from this point of vision. Let us pass the events that have occurred in solemn review in our thoughts, and pour upon them the light of sober reflection, and let us hail those which are coming as soldiers welcome conflicts which when successfully encountered will end the strife and hurry them home.

We are too apt, while looking forward to the close of our history, to neglect to look back and perceive that our history, so far, has been a series of closings—that the past is heaped up and crowded full of things which are finished, are ended forever. We forget that all the periods of time, all the days and years that are in the past, are as effectually ended, to us, as they will be at God's last day when the angel shall lift up his hand and swear by Him that liveth forever and ever that time shall be no more. They are not only ended in point of time and fact and privilege, but most of their events are ended in point of memory, especial-

ly those that lie far back amid the rubbish of the far-away years. How many of us here can remember and recite the events and occurrences of the first five years of our lives? To most persons there is scarcely a remembrance left of that period. Pass on through the next five years, and how much can you reproduce? Here and there an event may stand out visible and clearly defined, but the years, the long passing years, have rolled away and perished, as did the clouds of summer. As in books there are at the beginning and ending blank leaves, so ordinarily in human life there are years at the opening and close on which nothing is written. They have no record, no mark; they are blank. And even when we pass into childhood—the season of romp and growth and exhilaration—the years become huddled together, and we can neither thread them nor paint them from memory. They heap themselves up in masses, and at thirty we look back upon twenty years as if they were but a handbreadth. At that time how quickly year seems to follow year! They come and grow and orb to the full, and wane and die and are gone like shadows. It is so even with those years which while passing seemed to us an eternity—those years whose marks of suffering we will carry with us forever. Even those dissolved and passed away at last like drops of dew, and are now lost to us and unseen by us as they lie bedded in the ocean of eternity. My friends, these periods are gone—all gone. One by one they have left you; and while they have been passing, furrows have been forming and hairs

have been whitening and infirmities gathering. Go to the shore of that ocean into which they have been emptied, and call them. They were full of voices while passing, but they are silent now. Their period is passed and their record finished, and there they lie in their silent graves to meet you in the resurrection morn.

We think it a solemn thing to look forward to that time when we shall stand on the last brink of life and gaze back upon our buried years; but it is even more solemn, if you would but believe it, for you to stand in the freshness of youth, or in middle-life, and look back upon what years are gone, for they are registered and judged; and not when God's judgment dawns will that judgment be more irrevocable with many of you than it now is.

In life it is only the nearer hours that report themselves. As we pass on through the year, only days instead of hours are remembered. As we journey onward, days lapse into weeks, and these range themselves in lines whose continuity is measured by no prominent object. At length only years can be seen, and at last not even these in their individuality. For, as sailors when they leave the harbor carry with them for awhile the sight of shore, but who as they sail on lose first the low water-lines and then the higher masses, having nothing left at last to fix the eye on but some height rising far above the sea, and which after the night is passed is hidden by the bend of the earth's surface, so, my friends, even those years which stand out on the shores of the past like some

towering Teneriffe are finally shut out from our memory as we sail on toward the eternal shore. Ah, how true is it of us all that "we spend our years as a tale that is told!"

Go back with me now, and see how much you can remember. Be a child again, and call up the past. Take your place in the old homestead, and tell me what faces are fresh in your memory, and how many of the ten thousand events and scenes that were full of interest to you then can now be vividly recalled. Who were your kindred? Who were your visitors then? Who were your neighbors? Who were your playmates? What circumstances marked the history of your neighborhood? These things were all known to you then, they interested you, they were vivid realities to you, when a child; but what are they now but dimly remembered marks on the canvas of the past? And now pass on to your school-days, and tell me who learned their letters with you? Who were your teachers? Who sat on your right, who on your left? What were the events that marked your history then? Who among your school-mates was most frequently punished, and who escaped? Who was in the first class, who in the second and third? These are things which were important to you then—as important then as the fall of Mobile and the surrender of the South was to you last spring—and yet how little do you remember of them all? Go back now to the church you attended when a child, and who of its old men and women, who have long since entered upon their rest,

can you reproduce? How many of the young people who sat by your side do you remember? What can you recall of the minister—of his sermons, of the Sabbath-school, of its teachers and scholars, of the old grave-yard where you went when a child and saw a little brother or sister buried? And so I might go on, tracing step by step your entrance upon life—your early battles for fame or wealth, and the struggles and bright, golden hopes of your manhood. These are all passed, and are remembered now “as a tale that is told.”

And what shall we say of the unwritten dreams, the unfulfilled longings, the high-wrought reveries, the towering castles in the clouds which we have all felt and built and forgotten? This part—and to the young soul it is a beautiful part—this part of your life is gone too, all gone. One has touchingly said, in illustration of this, that “birds gathered for flight in autumn, and flying toward equatorial summer, often chance in their course to drop a feather from the wing which carries them through the air—a feather brilliant in color and curved like a bow, and which, wavering and swaying, falls into some thicket, while they flock on. After awhile the winter is past, the season changes, and they bend their course northward again. They pass the same spot where the spent feather lies, and do not see it. It is lost and hidden forever.” And so with our youthful fancies, which carried us far above human life and reality. They, like the downy feather from the wing, are lost and forgotten. As a tale that is told fades from the mind, so these untold tracteries

of thought, these airy evolutions of an inarticulate fancy, pass from us and are remembered no more. Where too are the admirations which in early life were to us living realities—the hero-worship that first stirred our souls? Where is the record of those wonders that so moved us then? those excitements which broke the level of life, and on which we fed for years? those events which then filled all the wide horizon of our hopes, and which roused up our passions as with the blast of a trumpet? The number of these we cannot recount, but alas! how many of them remain with us now? Where too are our great experiences—those towering hill-tops of gladness or sadness on which we once stood, and which we then thought would always be as clearly defined as in that moment of joyous or sorrowful realization? Alas, only a few of these are left to us now! As one who goes forth from a populous town often looks back and sees it growing smaller and smaller as he travels on—its houses fading and its broad streets and great palaces constantly lessening, until after awhile he can see only a long spire leaning out against the gray sky—so we, as we journey on in life, lose sight of much which was once great and important to us, and find at last that of all the experiences we shared, as we journeyed on, there remains but one or two visible to the eye of memory. The rest are all moldering in silence, and are forgotten as a tale that is told.

We should remember, though, that however much of the past may have perished from our thoughts,

we are still building our lives with the very same materials, as to kind, which we used in the time that is gone. In this respect we change but little, and it is this that makes it possible for us to learn wisdom from experience. The same rising and falling emotions; the same flow of endless thought; the same succession of events arresting the attention and occupying the feelings; the same endeavors for happiness; the same failures and successes, each with its train of pain or joy, and each so important as to make us think at the time that it can never be forgotten; the same discipline, with its heart-aches and agonies, to which the wise Father has always subjected his children—these are the materials out of which the past was built, and from which only can we ever build.

Only one day, with its hours and minutes and moments, remains. The next sun but one will rise and shine on the glad new year. It only remains for us to turn and bid farewell to the past. And now, farewell to its cares and burdens and troubles! Farewell to its fears and hopes and griefs! Farewell to its yearnings, its aspirations, and its struggles! They are gone, they are with the past. Farewell to many who started with us in the dawn of this year but who left us ere it closed—to the companion who was to some of you as an angel of God, but who to-night is an angel with God; to the babe that was yours, but who to-night is God's, and therefore more than ever yours, though beyond the reach of your arms, for the heart tends it yet and cradles it more lovingly than ever. Farewell to our

Christian brethren who have heard the trumpet before us and gone forward! Farewell to all! O year, thy march is ending! Thy work is done! Pass from us, for we shall see thee no more until, reäscending, we shall behold thy record in the all-judging day!

Masonic Address.

IN consenting to serve as your organ of communication with the outside world on this day of Masonic memories, I confess to a feeling of embarrassment under the task assigned me. To tell this multitude of the rise and progress and fortunes of our order would be to repeat a story which has formed the staple of most of the addresses to which they have listened, and would therefore fail to interest or profit them. These anniversary occasions, with their pomp and insignia, are not intended as mere festivals, but as days when a great brotherhood comes forth from lodge and chapter and council and commandery to bear witness to the worth and value of its principles as a great humanitarian institution. This is the responsible service you have imposed on me to-day; and now to this task I shall proceed at once to address myself.

The organization, one of whose festivals we celebrate to-day, is eminently social in its constitution and operations; and we live in an age in which the social principle is being profoundly studied. Men are examining it not as an abstraction, but as a means for diffusing ideas and principles, and for the propagation and triumph of political, social, and

religious theories and enterprises. It is upon this principle of association that our organization is attempting to carry out its purposes. It is a principle powerful for good or evil just as those who employ it may direct; and since candor compels this admission, we know not that we can better serve the cause of truth to-day than by fairly and honestly inquiring into this law of association, and ascertaining its uses and abuses so that these spectators who have come to take part in our festival may see how far Masonry is employing it for good. It is a principle whose foundations are laid in the wants of our race. Man is naturally weak and infirm, ignorant and evil. In addition to physical frailty, his mind is forced in by barriers over which, however intensely he may struggle, he cannot pass, while his moral nature is hung about with gloom and darkness. He is a prisoner, in bondage to evil, having a dim and disquieting apprehension of better things to come, yet held back by powerfully operating forces from their attainment. He realizes that life is made up of stern duties and hard tasks, and wrapping courage around him as a garment, he dares the conflict to which these invite; but alas! how often is he driven back, sorely wounded and sometimes despairing! Thus baffled and discouraged, he needs the sympathy of some other warm and suffering heart; and when two such hearts meet and mingle their mutual sorrows and struggles and hopes, their strength of endurance is doubled by the association. When men come together in this way, they soon learn that a concentration of powers and

a union of energies give efficiency to their enterprises and success to their plans, on the principle that two can do jointly what two could not do singly. Therefore, they form a bond in which they pledge conjoint exertion and mutual aid and sympathy. In this now we have illustrated the principle of association in its necessity and operations.

Take man separately, and he is among the weakest and most dependent of all God's creatures, but bind men together and they become invincible. They gain a mastery over nature, and are seen building pyramids, rearing temples, tunneling mountains, diking oceans, extending their dominion over sea and land, and making the universe itself, in a secondary sense, subordinate to their authority.

Our first entrance upon life and the necessary surroundings of childhood show that this law of social influence is of Divine ordination. The infant takes its place not in solitude, but in the family circle; and children, if left alone and to themselves, would perish through ignorance and helplessness. Therefore, the perpetuation of our race depends upon this divinely ordained law. Obedience to it is the secret of all progress, through manhood and through the ages, because men not only become more powerful by association but more intensified. It warms them into earnestness; it wakes up forces that were slumbering and unknown; it kindles enthusiasm; it fires the torpid soul with life, and establishes an electric communication between those whom it brings together and pledges to a common

work and purpose. Separate a man from human sympathy, doom him to solitude, shut him out from society where no human voice can speak to him nor human eye look upon him, and he is without energy—is only a breathing clod of earth, whose highest intellectual exercise would be reverie. Exile him from his kind, and no matter how green the earth, or beautiful the heavens, or magnificent the psalm sung by nature, in which storm and wind and breathing flowers take part—no matter what sublime appeals nature may make, nor what words of lofty cheer may break upon him from the grand universe—he will relapse into utter insensibility to all the beauty and grandeur around him; or if in some degree he should be alive to these, his highest realm of survey will be the shadowy and unsubstantial land of dream and fancy. In addition to this intensifying influence which the law of association exerts, it is eminently creative also; and in this is seen its greatest practical worth when wisely directed. It not only “brings to a point forces which existed before, and which were ineffectual because separated, but by the feeling and interest which it rouses it becomes a creative principle. It calls forth new forces, and gives even the individual mind a consciousness of powers which would otherwise have been unknown.” The mind in this way sees what union has accomplished, and gains confidence and hope. It awakes to a recognition of its own greatness, and to something like a proper estimate of its possibilities. It beholds its native dignity and the true measure of its strength.

The results of united effort stand forth as an illustration of its wonderful capabilities, and as a prophecy of grander things to come. It becomes sublimely confident, and is prompted to enter upon still mightier achievements with an unwavering belief that success is possible. In attempting these, unknown forces are developed, mightier energies are sprung, and by that reciprocal action of mind on mind which the practical workings of this law of association keeps up, and that interchange of thought which it makes necessary, capacities are discovered which were never dreamed of by man in his individual character. This is the secret spring in the great work of progress. It is the motive-power in that wondrous machinery so marvelously at work in this nineteenth century, and it gives promise of that happy time to come when one law will bind all nations and tongues and kindred of the earth in the bonds of universal brotherhood.

The law of association, though, however powerful for good, is equally so for evil; and hence every society should be rigidly scrutinized before it is admitted to popular favor. If its principles are open to inspection they should be fairly and honestly canvassed; or if these principles are veiled in secrecy and symbolized by ceremonies, then the tendencies of such organizations should be carefully, untiringly watched, for "by their fruits ye shall know them."

An association such as ours is simply society consolidated or systematized with a view to certain

ends. Now then, however the internal police of such a society may be for good and sufficient reasons concealed from the public, that public has a right to know the ends contemplated by it; otherwise the society arrays itself, by implication at least, against that public. Wherever there is a studied concealment of these ends ground is given for suspicion. The uninitiated, ignorant not only of the signs and pass-words to the inner temple, but of the designs of those who have entered, know not but that their peace, their liberty, and the very safety of their homes, may be in jeopardy. Hence we take the position that while social organizations may find it necessary to adopt a ceremonial known only to the initiated, they have no social right to conceal the end in view or the purpose contemplated. The world—the outside world—has a right to know what they are after; and to refuse this knowledge is to furnish that outside world with a good reason for regarding such associations in the light of enemies. But even when the object of a secret society is made public, and is acknowledged to be praiseworthy, the value of such a society will depend very much upon its influence on those constituting it. If under a mistaken view of man as an individual it should so associate him with others as to destroy or weaken the force by which he acts on himself, the tendency of such an alliance will be to work incalculable mischief upon its members. Every man's personality should be held sacred, and any alliance with another, or with others, that dims its recognition, that makes him the creature of an-

other, that silences those intuitions which belong to the individual soul, and which are divinely implanted voices, whereunto every man should listen as unto the voice of God—any alliance, we say, that does this must inevitably retard individual development. Therefore, if the *animus* of an association be such as will transform him from the independent, self-determining representative of the being that made him into a mere mechanized automaton—a simple adjunct to another or to others, a cipher beside a numeral—then do we say of that association that it is destroying in that man what he should hold inviolate, his sacred personality; that instead of opening it is by perversion drying up the fountains which would otherwise pour streams of unmeasured happiness around him.

The social element becomes valuable in proportion as it aids in the development of the creative forces in the individual. This is true of all society. It will always be found tributary to individual happiness and to general progress when it places us in situations where we may wisely expend these forces, and when it furnishes materials on which they may be exerted, thus opening the way for each individual to be blessed by, and to be a blessing to, the society with which he is identified.

It should never be forgotten that while all men have a common humanity, that humanity has been cast in molds of infinite diversity as to our physical, moral, and intellectual organization; and that true happiness is to be found and God honored

by each man advancing according to his individual mold and in his individual sphere; and that it should therefore be the aim of every man to be himself. He should recognize the fact that God has given him a distinct personality to be built up and improved by an individual outgrowth, for which perhaps the whole line of humanity may not be able to furnish him an exact model. Whenever the social principle loses sight of this, it becomes hurtful to the individual.

And now, take society, fashionable society—or, if you please, the general social system as adopted among us, and as we stand related to it—and what is it but a perversion of the principle we have enunciated? What is it in many places and with many persons but stereotyped hypocrisy, cast-iron insincerity, or India-rubber accommodativeness? Who dare be himself in society? Who dare speak out there only such words as the heart puts upon the lips? Who has forbearance, enough and humility enough to hear such words? For want of this courage and this forbearance the coin of insincerity is current everywhere in society—in our great fashionable centers, in our drawing-rooms and parlors, and haunts of assembled elegance. Men and women study it as they would some noble science; they gather up its phrases and store away its smiles and accent in memory, as some gather wealth; they rehearse its attitudes of body and intonations of voice in private, that they may wear the seeming of naturalness in public. O for some delivering Hercules to shatter the chains by which

American society is being bound to the Promethean rock of foreign fashion ! O for the native manhood and womanhood, the sublime dignity, the grand simplicity, of our earliest American ancestry ! We need a self-respect which would free us as a people from the pressure of that boa-constrictor of fashion by whose slow and stealthy convolutions the nobility of our self-hood is being crushed out. We need a self-respect that would perpetuate the lineaments of a national personality of which every American citizen should be proud, but which many seem anxious to efface in their blind devotion to every thing bearing a transatlantic imprint and a foreign stamp.

In what we have said now we wish to be perfectly understood. We hold that the social principle, whether considered in reference to society in general or to those associations of which we have spoken as society consolidated for the promotion of particular ends, has in it the elements of an immeasurable good or of an immeasurable evil, just as its ends may be worthy and as its operations may leave the individual an untrammelled worker or otherwise. We hold that whenever society, as we have defined it, sinks the individual in the mass; whenever it robs the soul of its birthright, its independence, its personality, and inaugurates a system of social, intellectual, or moral Helotism, by which that personality is made to wear a chain more galling and debasing than Roman conqueror ever put upon subjugated vassal ; when the social principle does this,

we say, it works evil and only evil, both to the individual and the body.

A great moralist once said, and it is a truth we need to feel most deeply in this susceptible age, that "our connection with society, while it is our greatest aid, is also our greatest peril." We are in constant danger of being molded by foreign instead of native influences, of becoming negative instead of positive characters, and of losing from the soul that creative and self-forming energy so necessary in working out our improvement. We are in danger, from the law of association, of substituting the consciences of others for our own—of paralyzing our own faculties by depending on others as guides—of being molded from abroad instead of from within. The pressure of society upon the individual is constant, accumulative, and immeasurable. Sometimes it is open and direct, and comes in the form of authority; at other times it is subtle and silent, and comes in the guise of blandishment and promise. No matter how it comes, its influence is beyond calculation. What mighty power is lodged in a frown or a smile, in the voice of praise and flattery, in scorn or neglect, in public opinion, in domestic habits and prejudices, in the spirit and state of the community to which we belong? As the same moralist has said, "there is nothing that escapes the cognizance," and it may be added "the influence," of society. Its legislation extends even to our dress, our movements, and our features; and as we have intimated, the individual bears the

traces, even in countenance, attitude, air, and voice, of the social influences amidst which he has been plunged.

We may all boast of our independence, yet we are all nevertheless in danger of growing up slaves to this exacting, arbitrary sovereign—of forgetting, or never learning, our true responsibility; of living in unconsciousness of that divine power with which we are invested over ourselves, and in which all the dignity of our nature is concentrated; of overlooking the sacredness of our minds, and laying them open to impressions from any and all who surround us. We believe that virtue lies in individual action, in inward energy, in self-determination; that the soul under the divine promptings must act from an inward spring. Even the good as well as the bad may injure us, if through that intolerance which is a common infirmity of the good they impose upon us authoritatively their own convictions, and obstruct our intellectual and moral activity. We believe that nothing morally good or great springs from mere sympathy and imitation. These principles will only forge chains for us and perpetuate our infancy, unless more and more controlled and subdued by that inward lawgiver and judge whose authority is from God, and whose sway over our whole nature can alone secure its free, glorious, and everlasting expansion.

Our greatest and most difficult duty as social beings is to derive constant aid from society in any of its forms without taking upon our necks its yoke; to open our minds to the thoughts, reason-

ings, and persuasions of others, and yet to hold fast to the sacred right of private judgment; to receive impulses from our fellow-beings, and yet to act from our own souls; to sympathize with others, and yet to determine our own feelings; to act with others, and yet to follow our own consciences; to unite social deference and self-dominion; to join moral self-subsistence with social dependence; to respect others without losing our own self-respect; to love our friends and reverence our superiors, and yet give our supreme homage to that moral perfection which no friend and no superior has realized, and which, if faithfully pursued, will often demand separation from all around us. The duty and difficulty of doing this every man must admit; and that society whose practical operations instead of hindering give aid to this undertaking commends itself to the world as an organized agency for human development.

The venerable order for which I stand here to-day as the appointed organ, in addition to its great object, which is benevolence, is by its nature and constitution an eminent auxiliary to man in this work of individual development and improvement. It is an association of men differing as widely perhaps as it is possible for men to differ, in religion, in politics, in social position, and in pursuits. The largest latitude is given to individual opinions and convictions, and therefore individual development is untrammelled. In fact, this very diversity gives aid to development. Masonry is one everywhere and among all nations. It brings nations and sections

and communities and individuals into a unity of freedom as to opinions. These widely separated elements, when brought together in that harmony and brotherly love which is the boast of Masonry, act on one another with a new power, and the result is that these differing and often hostile influences balance or neutralize one another, and almost compel the intellect to act, to compare, to judge, and to frame itself into order and harmony. Now, when men are brought together, as Masonry brings them—representing every variety of institutions, education, climate, temperament, religion, and history—who does not see that it furnishes an opportunity for our common nature to take form under the influence of every variety of help? The intellectual intercourse is enlarged, and the individual mind is quickened in proportion. It places us in communication with innumerable and diversified social influences, takes us out of the narrow circle of a neighborhood or church or community—in fact, makes us fellow-citizens with the friends of truth and brotherly love under the whole heaven; and by means of the very hostile influences thus brought together in harmony we gather aid and encouragement to that independent moral judgment and intellectual discrimination by which our individual views are more purified and enlarged.

While this, in brief, illustrates the constitution and practical workings of Masonry, we would but imperfectly perform the duty of the hour were we not to call attention to the end contemplated by this association. It seeks to advance no social,

political, or religious theory. These questions are left to the individual mind and conscience; all that is required of the candidate who kneels at her venerable altars is faith in God and love for his fellow-man. No man who denies the being of a God and is not in earnest sympathy with man, as the offspring of God and as the child of sin and suffering, can be a Mason. This sympathy is the great life-artery of Masonry, and runs through its entire anatomy, from entered apprentice with his symbolic lambskin to the gallant knight with helmet and plume and sword.

Our order recognizes in man's nature—sinful and erring and sorrowing as it is, fallen and degraded and wretched as it may be—a similitude of the divine; and it pledges the sympathy of each Mason's heart and the strength of his arm in the godlike work of lifting that nature from the depths of its pollution and misery and restoring it to social purity and happiness. The foundations of all successful efforts for man's social and moral redemption must be laid in a profound reverence for his nature and a belief in the possibility of his restoration; and unfortunately for our world, there is too little of this reverence and faith everywhere. They are ignored too much in our business relations and habits, in our general social life, and even in our religion. We undervalue this nature, we are too skeptical on the subject of human goodness, we indulge in mutual distrust; we see man in his wreck and ruin, and we lose sight of the hopeful fact that in that ruin are germs of an immeasurable grandeur which

appeal for help, and whose very appeals prove their worthiness to receive help. We forget that in that rubbish shines the symbol of divinity ; that though the shrine may be shattered and the altar broken, the godlike is still there, crying to the creative word for assistance, and that in response to that wild litany of agony, every brother's heart should throb with sympathy and every brother's hand be outstretched to aid. And O my brothers, not until we, whose very symbols are the lights which flash out the revelations of this reverence and faith, make our practice conform more entirely to our profession in this respect can we see Masonry triumphantly vindicating her pretensions before the bar of the world. And that we may do this the more effectually, let each one of us turn the eye within and learn our own immortality and its value, for in your nature and mine we shall behold types of all humanity. Sound this nature then, if you would know fully its grandeur. Question the dark sibyl if you would hear responses that will awe you into reverence. Know yourself if you would know and reverence and love your brother and be to him a benediction.

O when in those high moments of faith, of hope, and of purpose, which come to us all perhaps, I think of the soul with its vast capabilities, its wondrous creative power, its yearning after good, its longings for that home which is more beautiful than the isles of the evening land, which is lovelier than cloud-palaces glimmering in the light of setting suns or gliding spirit-like across the golden

sheens of western waves; when I think of it as filled with these aspirations for the beautiful and the holy, and as borne on by these marvelous activities above the material and even beyond—far, far beyond the “milky baldrick of the skies”—to the higher communion of angels and God, I feel that it is an infinitude of itself, and am led to regard it with a reverence only less than the profound awe with which I look up to God. This is the reverence and faith, the purpose and hope, on which every true Mason builds his labor of love; and under this hopeful view of his fellow-man he toils. This is the estimate which, in our sacred retreats of brotherly love, we learn to place on man; and the great end of our work as laid down in our charts, and as taught by our symbols and in our ceremonies, is to give and receive aid in our efforts to bring human nature up to its utmost possibilities.

Beginning with faith in God, we are to aspire after truth and goodness, circumscribing our desires and restraining our passions, and keeping in constant exercise charity toward all men. Under the remembrance of our own frailties, we are to deal gently and kindly with the erring, bearing with one another even as we hope to be forgiven. We are to love our brother even in his sinfulness, to seek him in his waywardness, to restore him in his wanderings, and above all to be true and faithful to him in his adversity.

O brethren, ours is a glorious temple. Its base is the earth, its covering the skies, and its altar the human heart. The communion we share knows

nothing of geographical or sectarian boundaries. It reaches out over the walls of nations, it stretches across seas, it penetrates all creeds and forms of government; it speaks a language which the Hindoo and the Moor, the Persian and the Greek, the African and the Tartar, the European and the American, can understand, and which can be heard and recognized and heeded amid the roar of battle and the carnage of war.

The past of Masonry has been as useful as her future to-day is hopeful. Storms have swept her summit and convulsions have rocked her foundations, yet she has survived every tempest, and stands to-day on a broader basis and lighted with a richer splendor than ever. Behold her rising as some vision of beauty in the days of Solomon, and like a mighty enchantress collecting the marble, the cedar, and the cypress, and rearing silently the temple of God.

No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rang,
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprang.

Throughout Egypt and Greece and Asia Minor her monuments were seen towering toward heaven, and soon the civilized world was filled with her wonders. Behold her afterward, an exile from the land of her birth, mourning over her falling temples as they crumbled beneath the iron heel of the oppressor, her lights faintly glimmering along the shores of the Tyrrhenian and Ægean seas. A little later, and we see her fettered and manacled and a prisoner at Rome. We weep for her there on the Tiber, but as we weep she emerges from her thralldom and is

seen standing amid martyrs' flames proudly proclaiming the triumph of her principles; and then, again, when her lights and jewels were growing dim from persecution, the Crusaders found her, and robing her in royal vestments, they led her forth to rescue the holy sepulcher from the hands of the infidel. Since then, she has sometimes, like the dove from the ark, hovered over an ocean-world of tumult and storm, with scarce a place whereon to rest her feet, and sometimes, like that dove, has been seen bearing the olive-branch to individuals and nations who were at enmity and engaged in strife. She has known the gloom of dungeons, she has heard the roar of faggot and flame, she has felt the torture of the rack; yet, she still lives, and to-day, like the monarch bird of heaven, her wing is upon the wind and her eye upon the sun—the clouds vanishing beneath and the heavens all radiant above. We too, dear brethren, meet to-day with sad memories of a stormy past. Since you last came together the tempest has been abroad, and your tattered canvas and torn sails tell of rough seas and of dangers passed. Thank God that they are passed, and that here, in this green isle of brotherly love, this calm retreat of Masonic fellowship, we have come to-day to moor our barks and gather fresh courage for the journey before us! You may have done much, but there is still much to do—much for yourselves and much for others. Esteem nothing done until all is accomplished—your own personal and individual purification, and the happiness of widowhood and orphanage, whose hope, next to God, is in you. I

beg leave to repeat to you, by way of illustration and encouragement, Leigh Hunt's beautiful allegorical vision:

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich and like a lily all in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in his room he said,
"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,
And with a look made all of sweet accord
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Adhem. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still, and said: "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men."
The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
It came again, with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest;
And lo, Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

So mote it be with me and you, and with all
worthy and accepted Masons!

THE END.

